PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

PLANTING IDEAS

96 beautiful plants with flowering stamina

CHOOSING AND GROWING

autumn-flowering colchicum

Bring your containers indoors

Ideas for pots to take you into winter

How to propagate chrysanthemum

Plus

Contemporary design in traditional spaces

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Editor's letter

This November issue of *Gardens Illustrated* is plant rich and full of planting ideas for the colder months ahead.

In West Sussex, the garden of a 17th-century farmhouse is one of bold geometric forms and gentle hues. A restrained palette of beautifully clipped yew, box and silvery foliaged *Pyrus salicifolia* is matched with pleached trees and espaliered *Malus* 'Evereste', bright with fruits. A contemporary planting of golden-hued *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent', *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' and perennials in burnt tones, such as rudbeckias and heleniums, sit in juxtaposition to the historic house. Designed by Chris Moss, it's on page 34.

Hardy chrysanthemums are plants with flowering stamina. In coppers, rusts and fiery reds, it is newer, younger chrysanthemums that flower most prolifically. On page 74 nurseryman Jonny Bruce selects his favourites from those he grows at De Hessenhof and he offers a propagation masterclass to ensure a constant supply of flowers.

In Coming in from the cold, on page 58, head gardener Benjamin William Pope creates three late-season containers that can be brought indoors as the weather starts to bite. Note his wonderful combination of succulents and evergreens in the warmth of a terracotta pot.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

Head gardener Benjamin William Pope puts an antique bird cage to good use for a container display, page 58.

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

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EVA NEMETH

Combining contemporary and traditional planting styles in a farmhouse garden in West Sussex, page 34.

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Chrysanthemum 'Granatapfel' by Jason Ingram

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EVENTS AND OFFERS

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- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 32
- Save up to £21 on a Hellebore Collection, plus bulbs for naturalising from Hayloft Plants† – page 106

†Reader offer available to UK readers only.

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The course is led by **Andrew Fisher Tomlin, designer and Chartered Horticulturist,** and we are fortunate to have **leading specialists lecturers** including Neil Lucas of Knoll Gardens, Tony Kirkham from the **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew** and Nigel Dunnett from the **University of Sheffield.** Designer tutors include James and Helen Basson, Jo Thompson, Ann-Marie Powell, Carolyn Willitts and Amanda Patton.

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RICHARD BLOOM

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Rod Leeds
Rod chooses the best autumn-flowering colchicums, page 44. *"Come drought or deluge, the vibrant and fresh colchicum flowers are a superb highlight for the autumn garden."*

Eva Nemeth
Eva photographs a contemporary farmhouse garden, page 34. *"From behind the camera, I loved observing the quiet and beautiful way autumn embraced this garden."*

Rory Dusoir
Rory visits a garden designed by Chris Moss, page 34. *"The scenery and the farmhouse were already breathtaking, and it was fascinating to discover how Chris was able to enhance this yet further."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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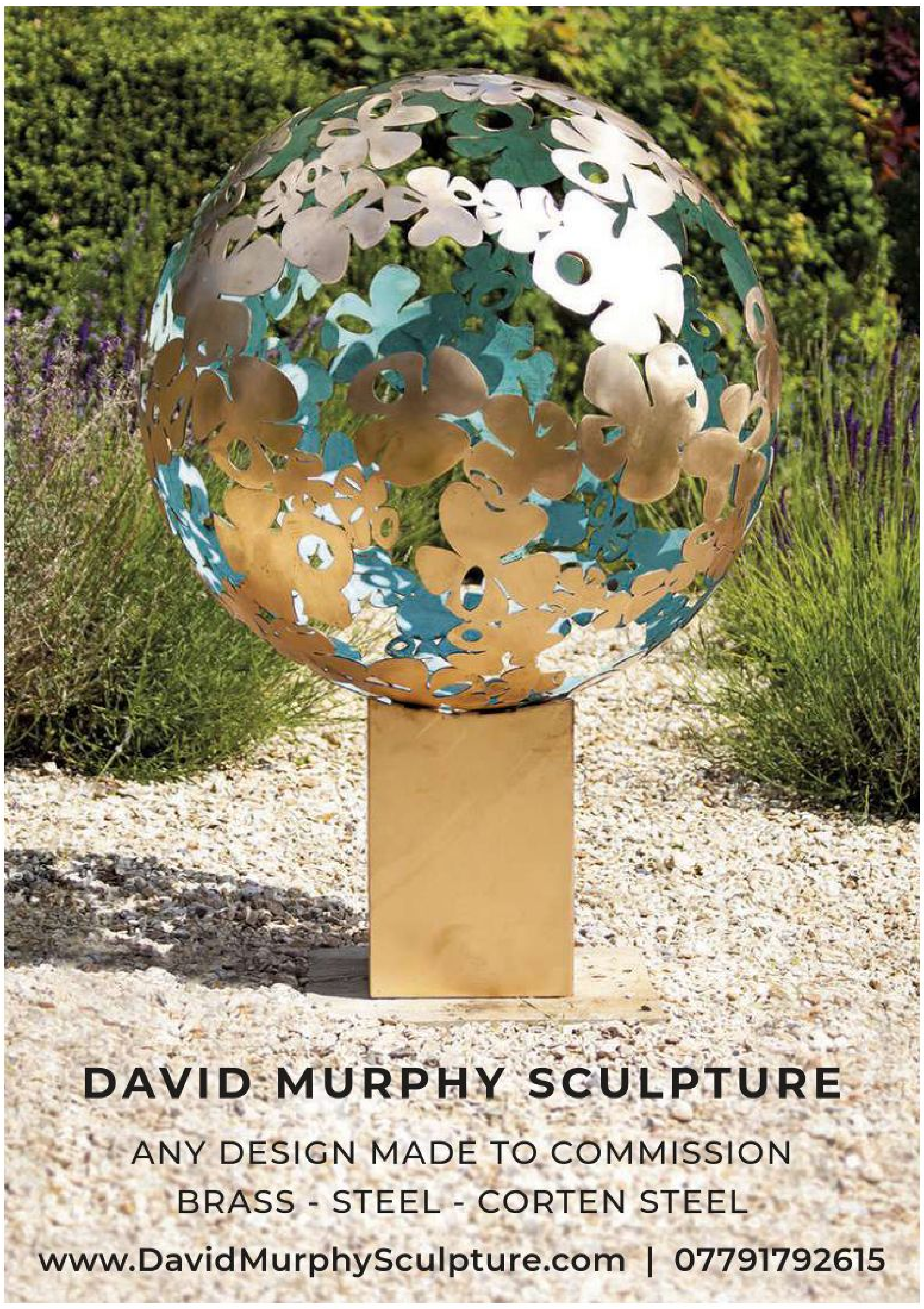

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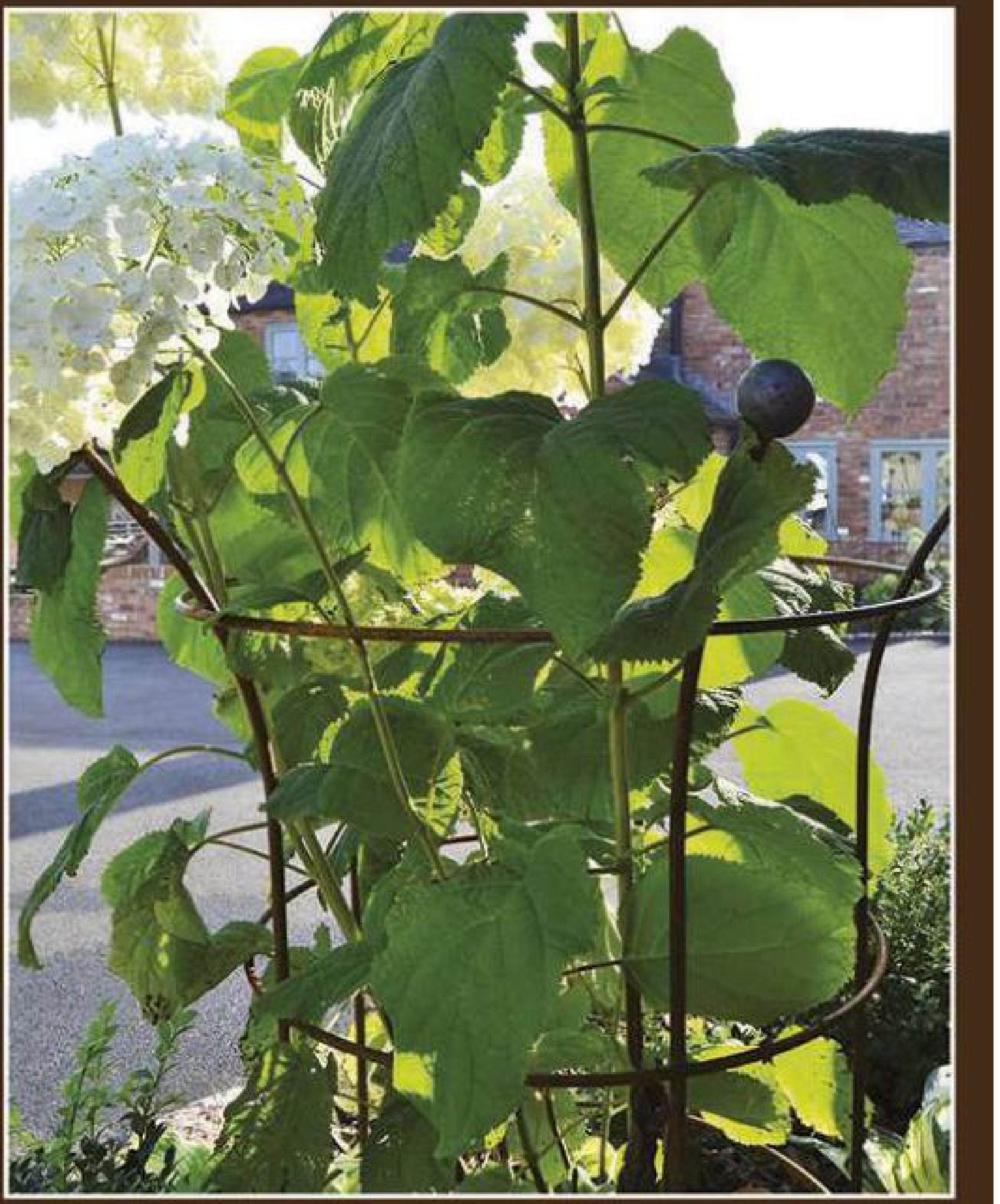

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28 MARCH – 2 APRIL 2020

GARDENS OF MARRAKECH & TAROUDANT

Join Kirsty Fergusson, with special guest host, award-winning designer Tom Stuart-Smith, to explore the wonders of Morocco's contemporary gardens.

GUEST HOST
Tom Stuart-Smith
award-winning landscape architect working on projects internationally.

This special Moroccan garden tour offers a unique selection of 21st-century, mostly private gardens, designed by some of our best-known designers. Tom Stuart-Smith will join the group for two days to guide you through his own creation, **Le Jardin Secret** in the heart of Marrakech, while in the city of Taroudant on the southern edge of the Atlas mountains, we visit a series of remarkable gardens designed by Eric Ossart and Arnaud Maurières, two French globetrotting botanists, plant hunters and renowned garden designers. A further highlight will be a day of all things Yves Saint Laurent, including a visit to the new YSL museum, a tour of **Jardin Majorelle**, and a private view of the garden of the adjacent **Villa Oasis**, where Yves Saint Laurent lived during his time in Morocco.

In a picture-book setting with views of the High Atlas Mountains, wonderful climate and cuisine, and great shopping, visitors will discover two warm and friendly cities steeped in history. We stay at two remarkable, small hotels: guest house **Jnane Tamsna**, surrounded by its own botanically rich and fascinating garden in an oasis setting, and **Dar al Hossoun** in the ancient city of Taroudant, an eco-friendly *riad* surrounding courtyards planted with many fascinating plant species.

TOUR LEADER
Kirsty Fergusson
trained at Capel Manor. She is now a garden writer living in France.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing, is £3,898 (single supplement of £350 levied by hotels).

The price includes: bed-and-breakfast accommodation at Jnane Tamsna and Dar al Hossoun; five evening meals with wine plus five lunches; return flights from London Heathrow; and all transportation and visits in Morocco. The price does not include extras at the hotels or travel insurance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT

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DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

Festive fair

The Beautiful & Useful craft fair returns to the Garden Museum this month just in time to pick up some gorgeous gifts for Christmas. Among the works on offer are Jane Crisp's beautiful contemporary trugs, Bee Bowen's naturally dyed silk scarves, woven willow baskets by Christiane Gunzi, and knives hand carved by nurseryman Graham Gough. The Garden Café will also be open for refreshments and lunch, making this the perfect early Christmas shopping experience. 17 November, 10.30am-5pm. Tickets for the event cost £5 in advance, which includes entrance to the museum's collections (normally £10), *Gardens Illustrated* readers can buy tickets at the discounted price of £4. Simply enter the code GIBEAUTIFUL when booking online. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**

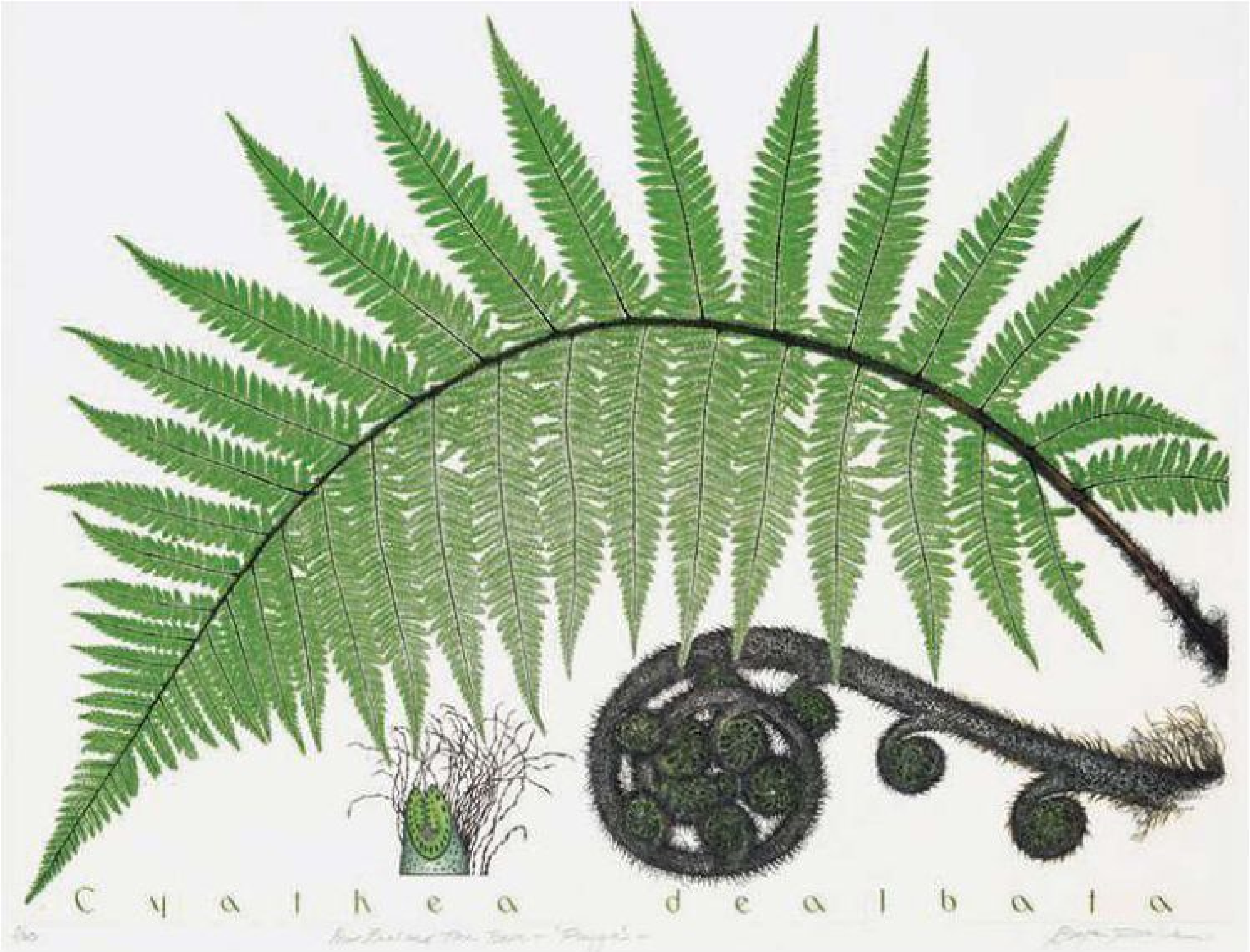
News

COMPILED BY JULIET GILES

ANNE GILBERT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

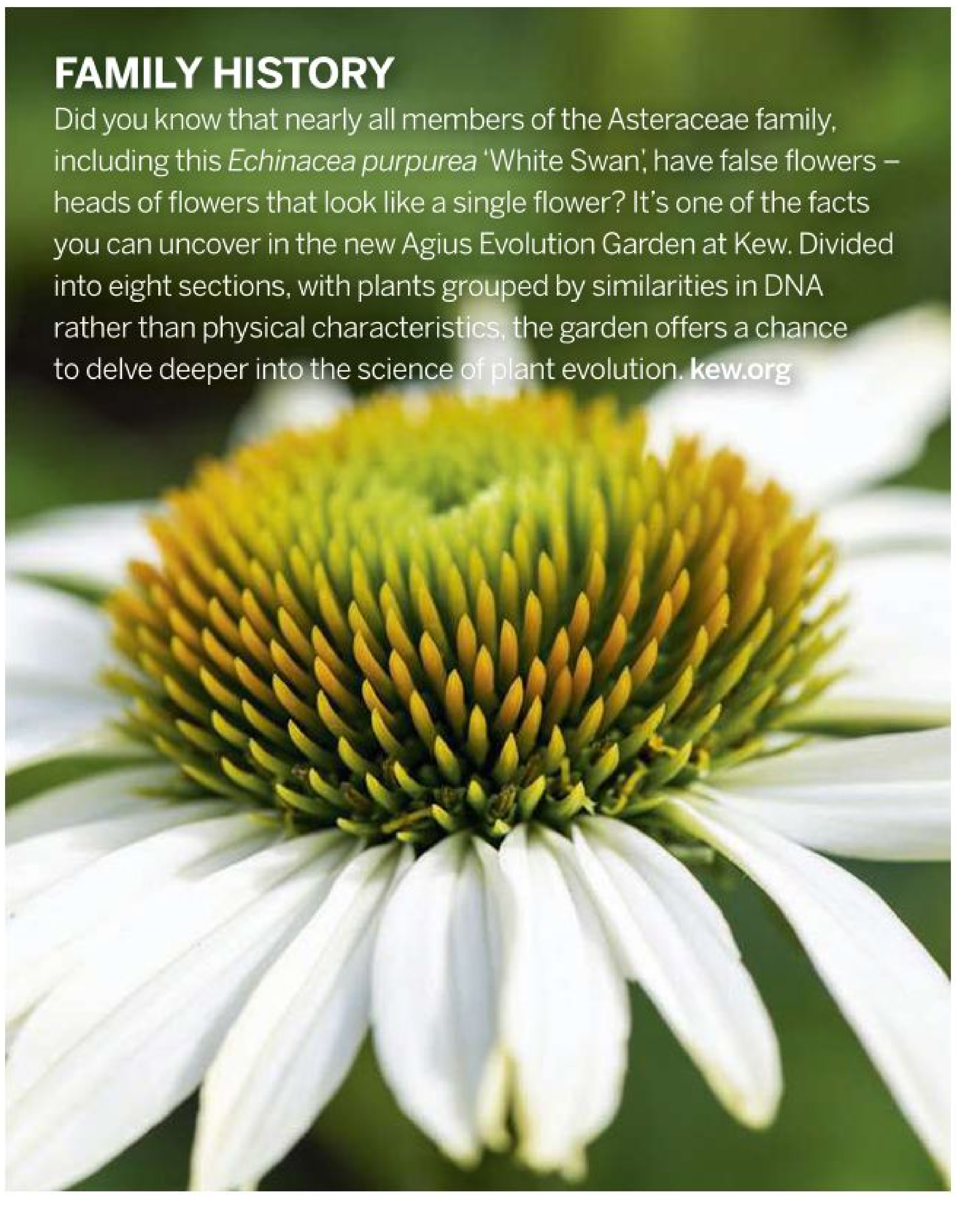
Saving ancient woodland

First discovered in the UK in 2012, chalara ash dieback is still on the increase in the UK and has now been found among trees in Silk Wood, one of the oldest parts of Westonbirt, The National Arboretum in Gloucestershire. Forestry England is embarking on a major project to try to save the ancient woodland, by replacing many of the older ash trees with a wide variety of tree species that are more resilient to pests and diseases. Chalara ash dieback, which is caused by the fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, thins the tree's crown, ultimately leading to the death of the tree. Its spread is difficult to prevent as it travels on wind-borne fungus spores. Although the project will mean Silk Wood will look and feel very different, it will eventually result in a healthier woodland. **forestryengland.uk**



Natural beauty

Botanical art is Shirley Sherwood's passion. Over 30 years she has built a private collections of more than 1,000 works by 303 artists from 36 countries. This month you can see 150 paintings from her collection at *Modern Masterpieces of Botanical Art – The Shirley Sherwood Collection* in the gallery that bears her name. 16 November – 15 March 2020. Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. **kew.org**



FAMILY HISTORY

Did you know that nearly all members of the Asteraceae family, including this *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan', have false flowers – heads of flowers that look like a single flower? It's one of the facts you can uncover in the new Agius Evolution Garden at Kew. Divided into eight sections, with plants grouped by similarities in DNA rather than physical characteristics, the garden offers a chance to delve deeper into the science of plant evolution. **kew.org**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, RBG KEW; *SILVER TREE FERN: CYATHEA DEALBATA* 2007 BY BRYAN POOLE © SHIRLEY SHERWOOD COLLECTION

A BRIGHT IDEA

As with the garden, clever use of light and shade is the key to the perfect interior

Whether it be a sun-drenched terrace or daylight dappled through the leaves of an aged oak tree, light can create an array of different moods within the garden. Everyone loves a bright summer's day, but there are times when those rays can become overwhelming, leaving us seeking cool and shade.

It's the same indoors, where the clever use of bespoke, hand-made blinds and shutters can diffuse the sun and add a stylish feature to your rooms. And when it comes to window furniture, nobody knows more than Thomas Sanderson.

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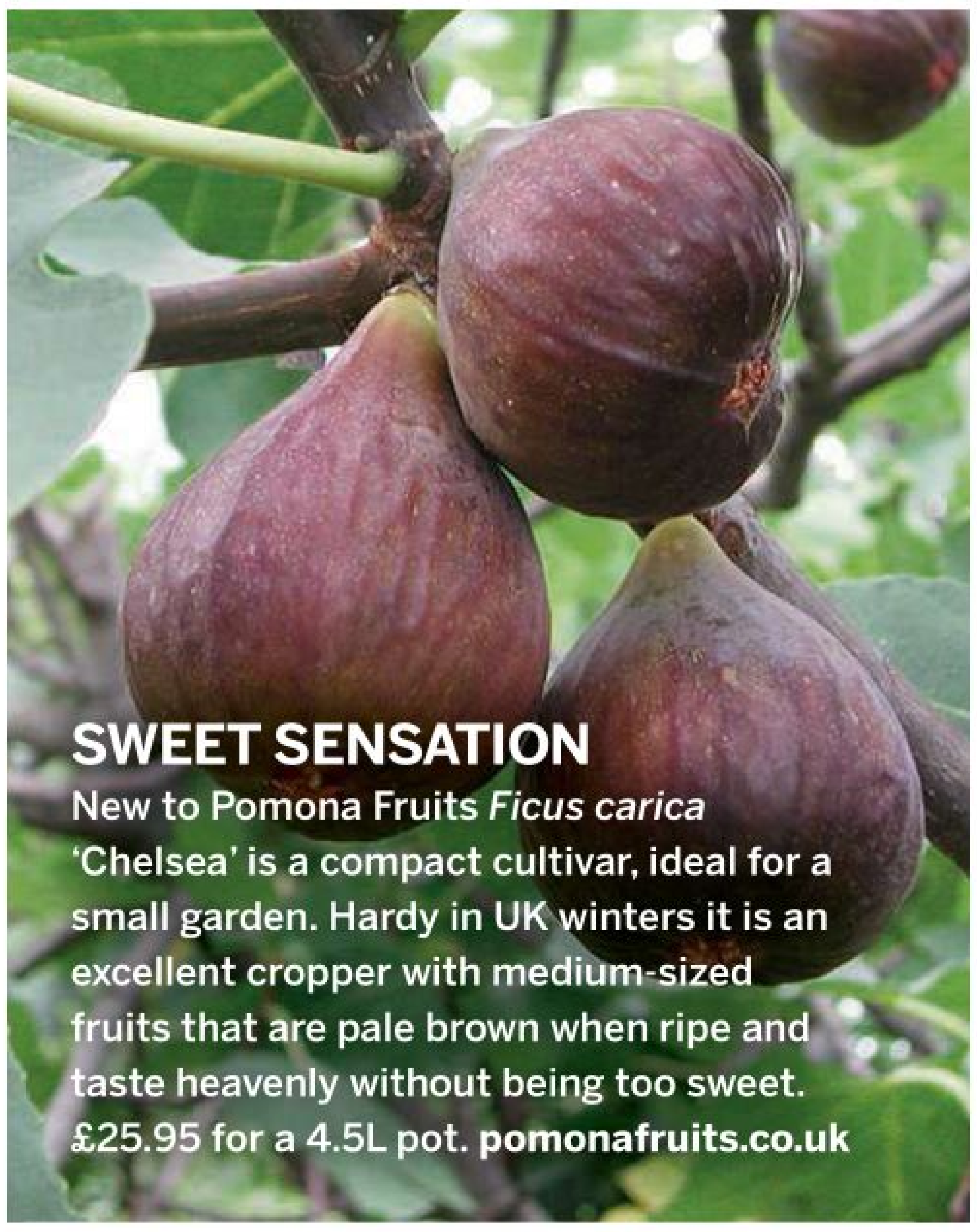
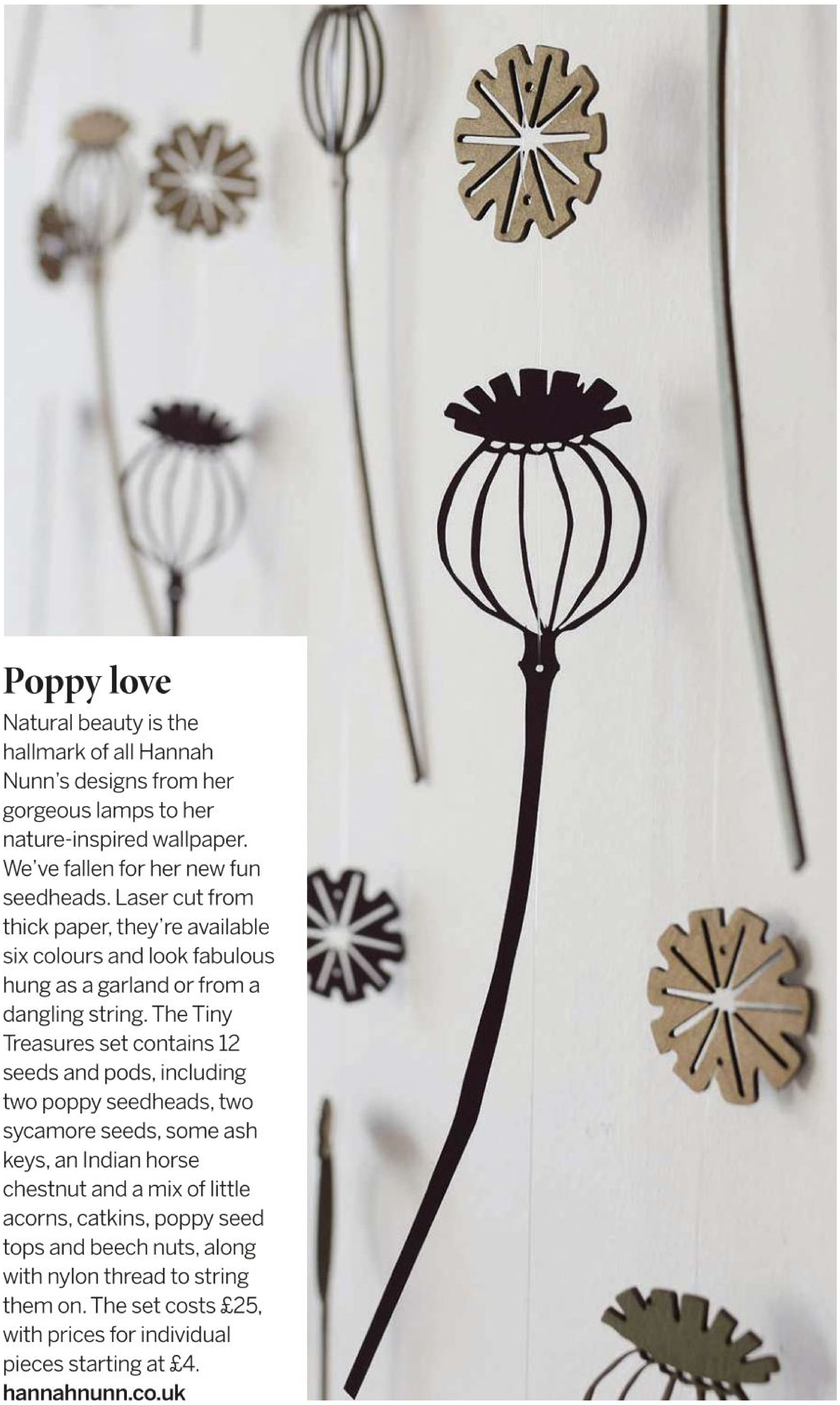
Jack in the box

Gardeners at Ham House in Richmond have found new allies in their battle to save the garden's box hedges – jackdaws. The birds have been spotted feasting on the destructive caterpillars of the box tree moth, which in its native China is controlled by a parasitic wasp but was thought until now to have no natural predators here. The garden team are now looking at ways to attract more jackdaws and other birds, by changing the way they prune the hedges. **nationaltrust.org.uk**



SWEET SENSATION

New to Pomona Fruits *Ficus carica* 'Chelsea' is a compact cultivar, ideal for a small garden. Hardy in UK winters it is an excellent cropper with medium-sized fruits that are pale brown when ripe and taste heavenly without being too sweet. £25.95 for a 4.5L pot. pomonafruits.co.uk



Poppy love

Natural beauty is the hallmark of all Hannah Nunn's designs from her gorgeous lamps to her nature-inspired wallpaper. We've fallen for her new fun seedheads. Laser cut from thick paper, they're available six colours and look fabulous hung as a garland or from a dangling string. The Tiny Treasures set contains 12 seeds and pods, including two poppy seedheads, two sycamore seeds, some ash keys, an Indian horse chestnut and a mix of little acorns, catkins, poppy seed tops and beech nuts, along with nylon thread to string them on. The set costs £25, with prices for individual pieces starting at £4. **hannahnunn.co.uk**

STEVE SAYERS; NATIONAL TRUST CHRIS DAVIES

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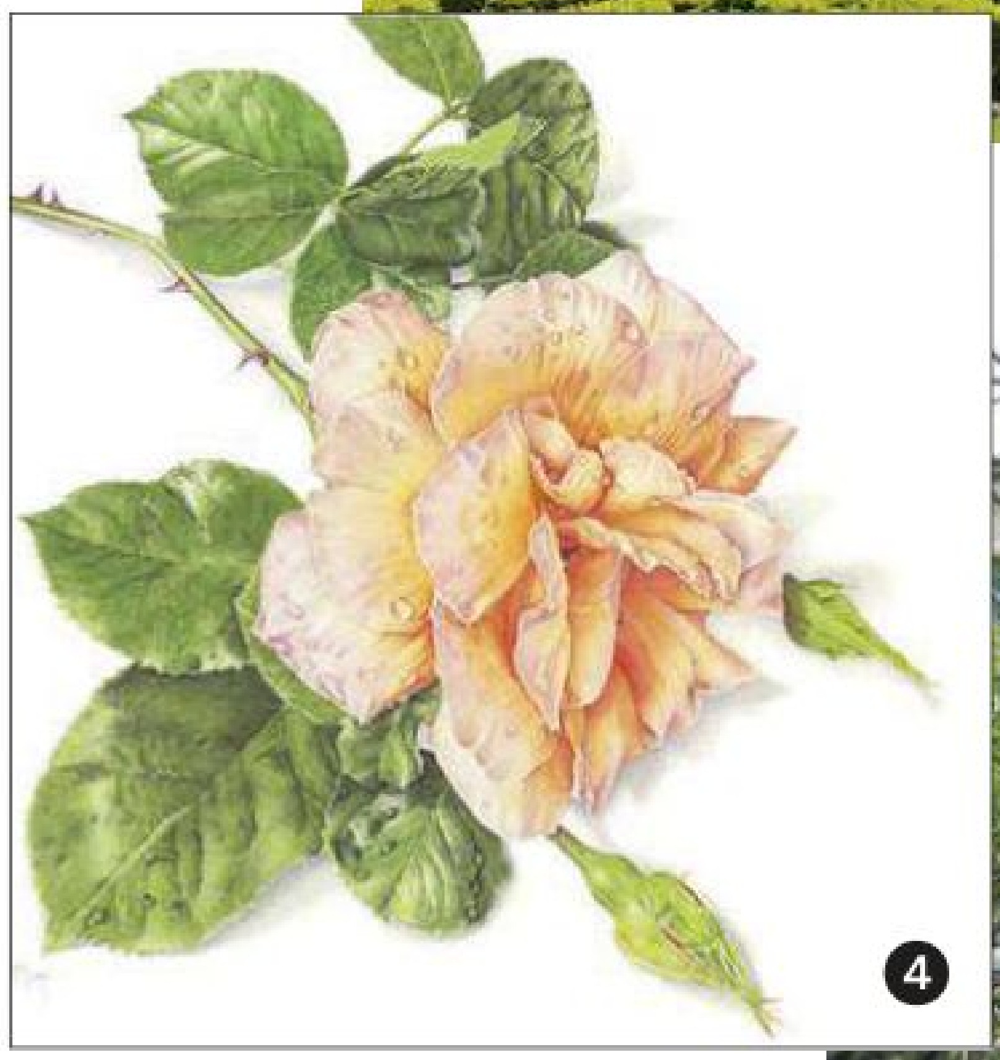
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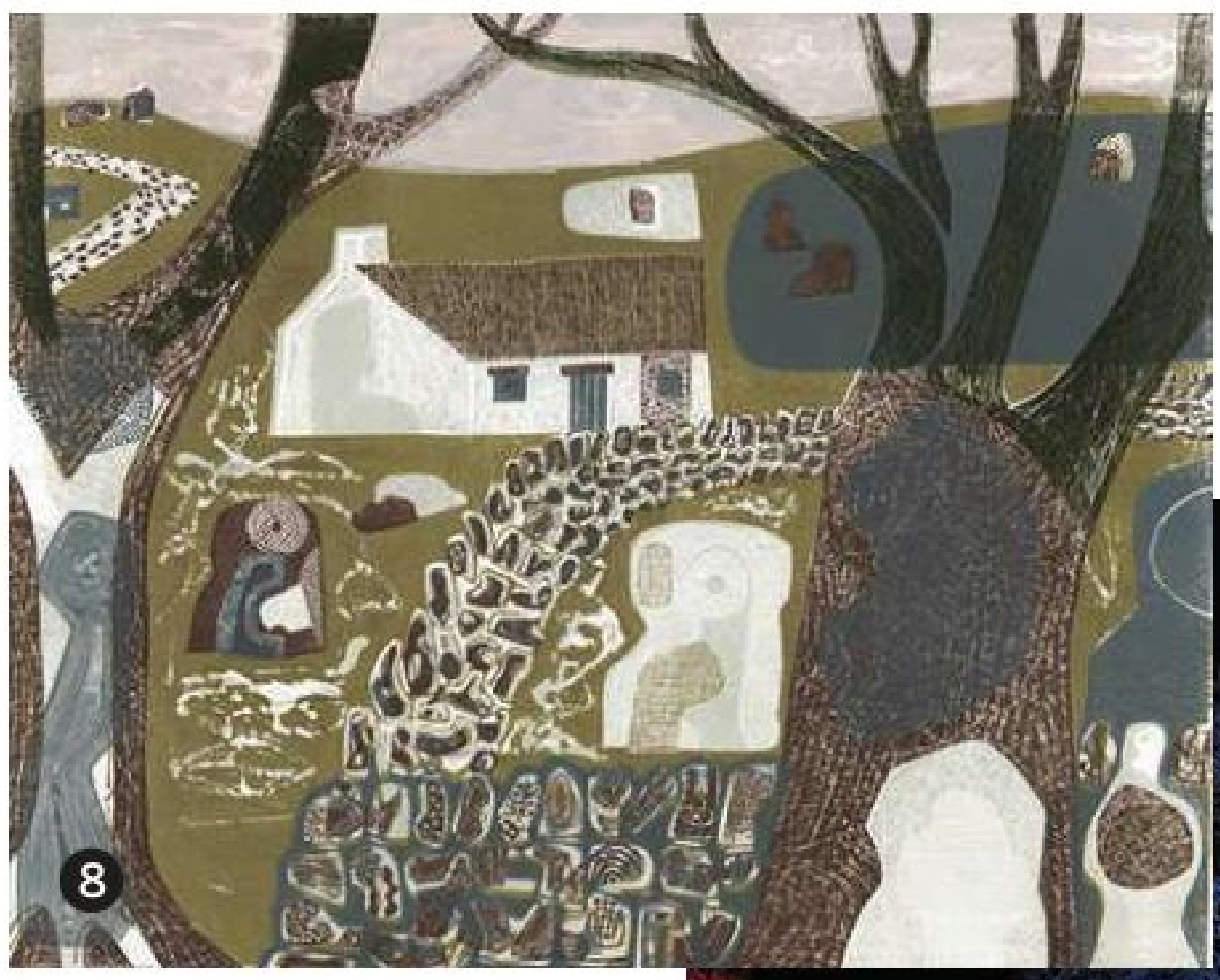
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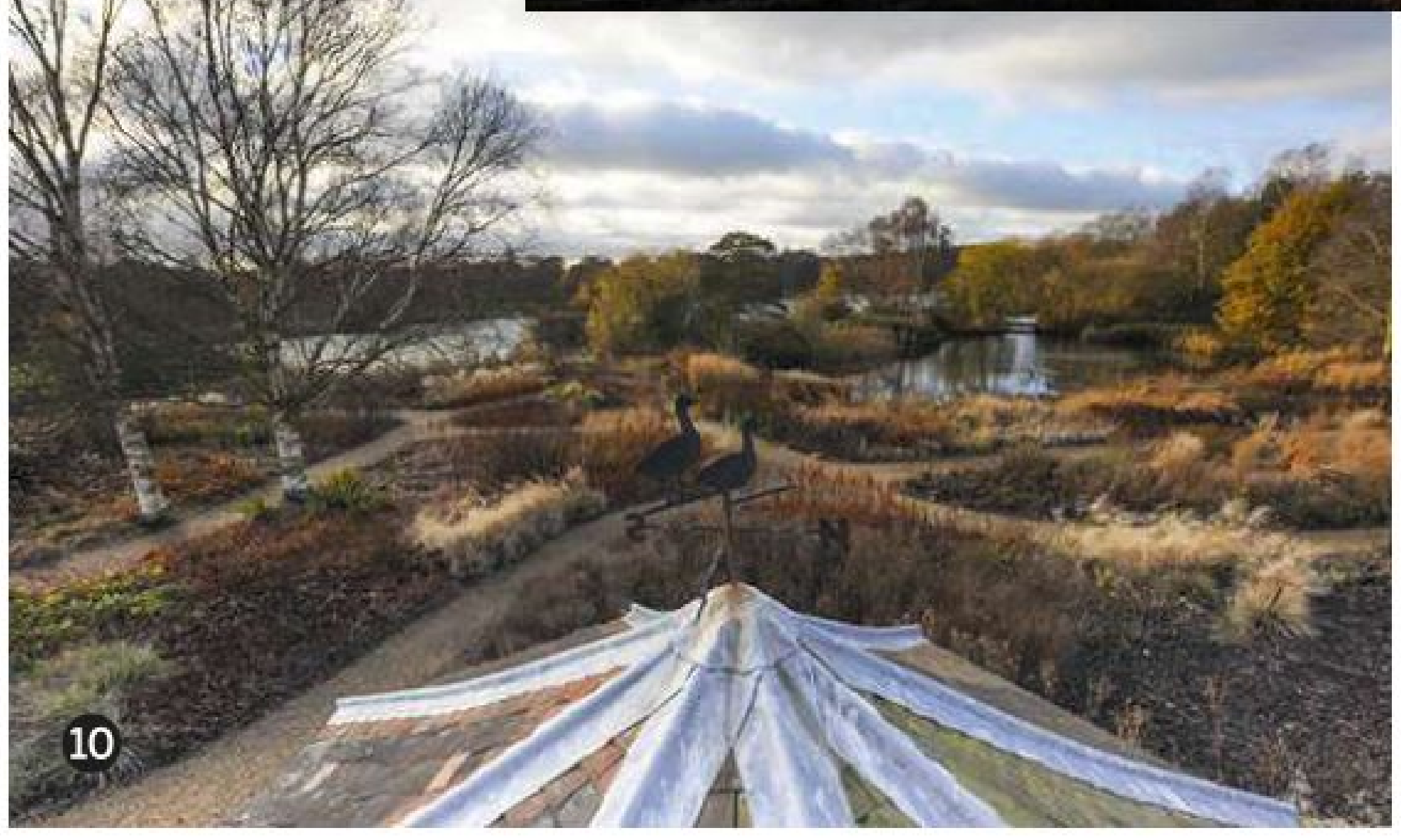
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❶ Scottish Tree Festival
Make the most of Scotland's spectacular array of diverse woodlands and gardens as the Scottish Tree Festival returns for its second year. There are more than 70 locations, including Fyvie Castle (shown) near Aberdeen, taking part nationwide. Until 1 December. visitscotland.com

❷ Private Gardens Tours at Holkham Hall
Explore the private gardens of Holkham Hall in Norfolk, including formal parterres, designed by the 18th-century landscape architect William Andrews Nesfield and an arboretum. 3 November, from 11am. £10. Holkham Hall, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk NR23 1AB. Tel 01328 713111, holkham.co.uk

❸ The History of Garden Furniture Design
John Danzer, historian and designer, will explore the history of garden furniture design from the medieval age to the present day. 5 November, 7pm, £25. Garden Museum, 5 Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB. Tel 020 7401 8865, gardenmuseum.org.uk

❹ Rosa – A Life of Roses
Discover the work of RHS gold medallist Janie Pirie, in this exhibition of her rose paintings, timed to coincide with the launch of her book of the same name. 5-10 November, 10am-5pm. Admission free. Mall Galleries, The Mall, London SW1. Tel 020 7930 6844, mallgalleries.org.uk

❺ Niwaki Pruning Course
Spend a day learning the art of Japanese-style pruning from Jake Hobson, founder of Niwaki. 7 November, 1am-4pm. £175, including lunch and refreshments. Architectural Plants, Stane Street, North Heath, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1DJ. Tel 01798 879213, architecturalplants.com

❻ Outdoor propagation
Learn how to use some traditional methods of propagating hardy plants on this practical course with Aberglasney's head gardener. Booking essential. 14 November, 10am-3pm. £55. Aberglasney Gardens, Llangathen, Carmarthenshire SA32 8QH. Tel 01558 668998, aberglasney.org

❼ SGD Autumn Conference
Find out where designers get their inspiration at the Society of Garden Designers Autumn Conference. Speakers include designers Luciano Giubbilei, Jennifer Coe and Matt Keightley. 16 November, £182. Royal Geographical Society, London SW7 2AR. Tel 0115 968 3188, sgd.org.uk

❽ Melvyn Evans: Imprinting the Land
Discover the work of artist, illustrator and printmaker Melvyn Evans in an exhibition of his work at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. 16 November 2019 – 23 February 2020, 10am-5pm. Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4LG. Tel 01924 832631, ysp.org.uk

❾ Glow at RHS Garden Harlow
Explore an illuminated trail around RHS Garden Harlow Carr. 21 November – 28 December, Thursday – Saturday, 4.30-8pm. £10. RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 1QB. Tel 01423 565418, rhs.org.uk

❿ Four Gardens Winter Walk
Join Pensthorpe Natural Park's head gardener for a tour of four gardens, including the Piet Oudolf-designed Millennium Garden. Includes lunch. 22 November, 2.30-4pm. £16.95. Pensthorpe Natural Park, Pensthorpe, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0LN. Tel 01328 851465, pensthorpe.com

⓫ Planting Design Diploma
Enrol now for the London College of Garden Design's Planting Design Diploma starting in January 2020. Taught at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the course is aimed at garden designers, landscape architects and professional gardeners who want to expand their skills and expertise in planting design. Tel 01483 762955, lcgd.org.uk

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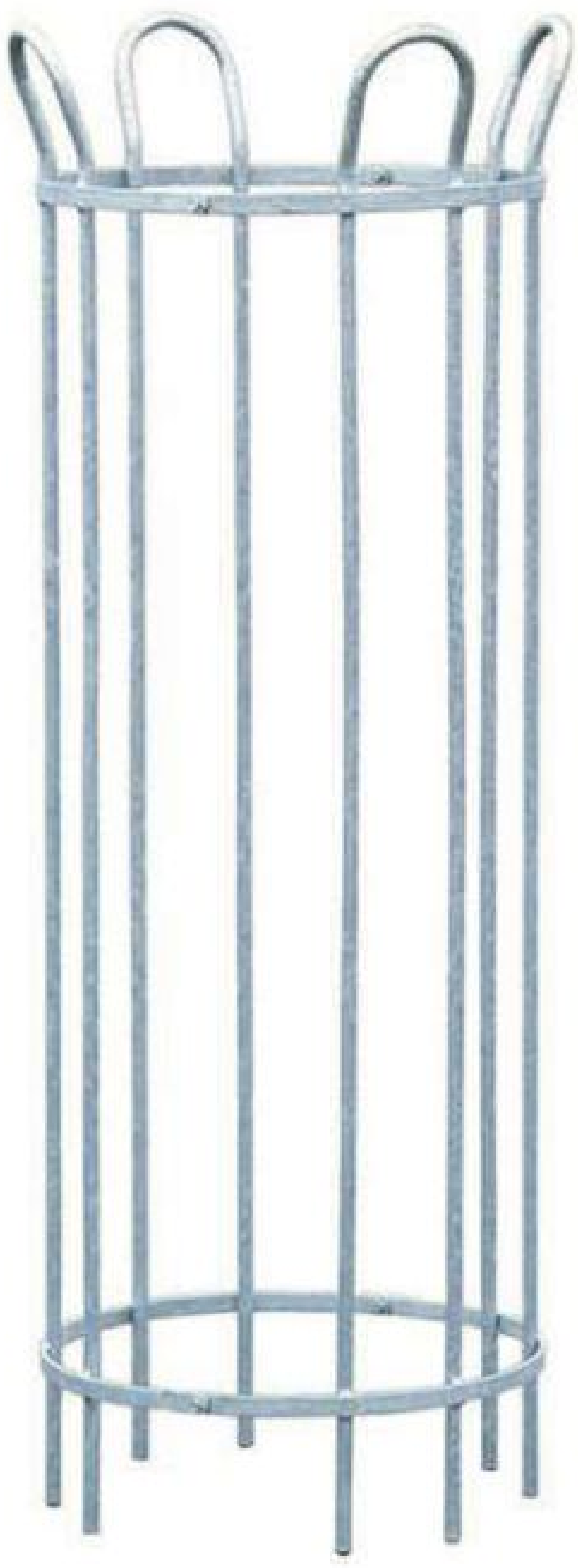

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ACAENA MICROPHYLLA ‘KUPFERTEPPICH’

I grow this charming plant for its copper-coloured foliage, which comes into its own in autumn and winter. In summer the finely feathered foliage is punctuated by small, yellow flowers that in autumn develop into attractive red burrs. It makes a wonderful groundcover plant but doesn’t like to be overshadowed by others. It’s best grown in a gravel garden with plenty of light and air. It can also be used to great effect between paving slabs, as it is robust enough to tolerate being occasionally trodden on.

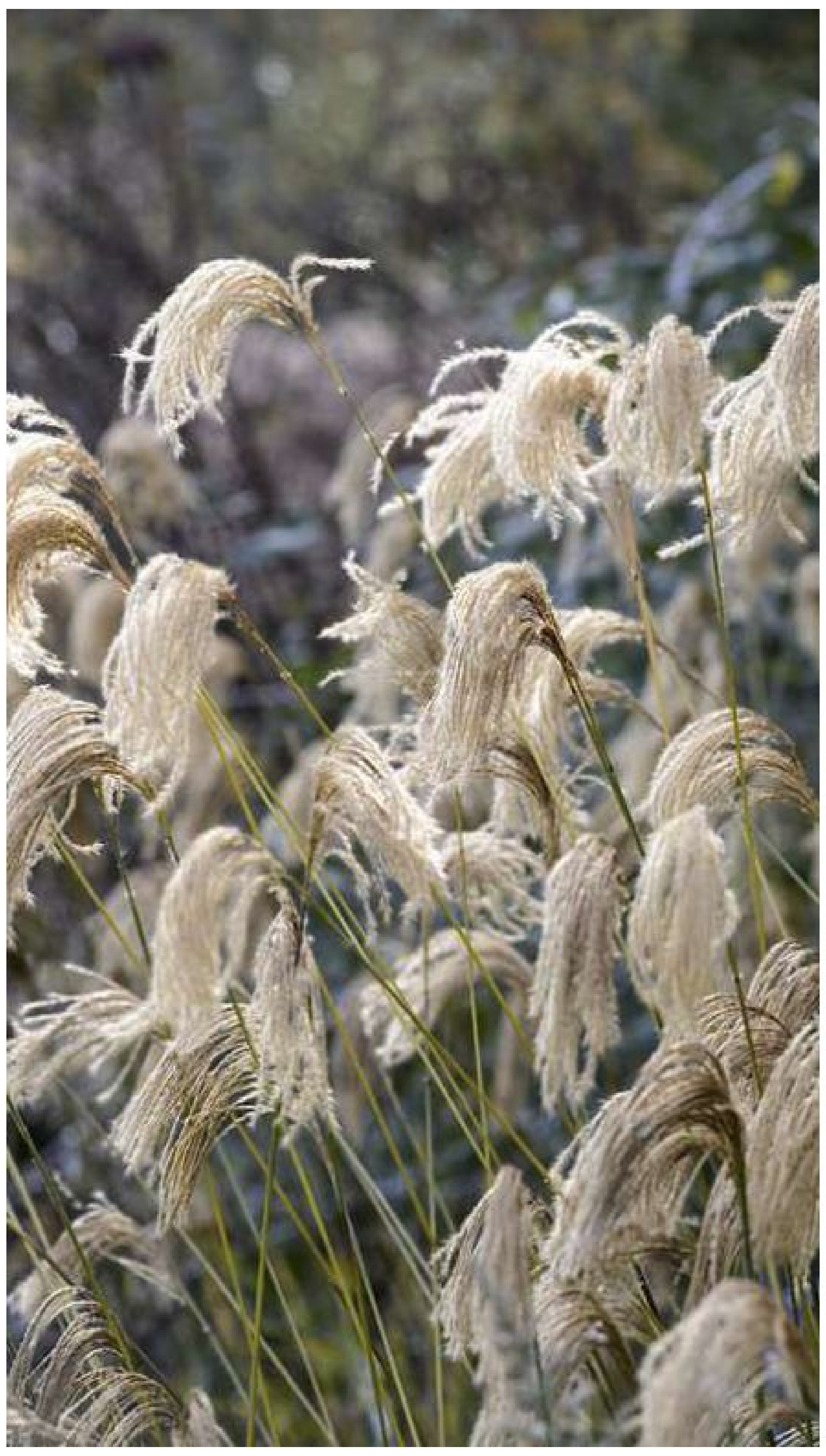
Height 10-20cm.
Origin Garden origin (species from New Zealand).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-8b†.
Season of interest Interesting foliage throughout the year.

Tom Brown
is head gardener
at West Dean Gardens
westdean.org.uk

NOVEMBER PLANTS

From a striking but prickly anchor plant to soft grasses and copper-coloured foliage, Tom finds plenty of colour and contrast to lift November's cooler days

WORDS TOM BROWN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



MISCANTHUS NEPALENSIS

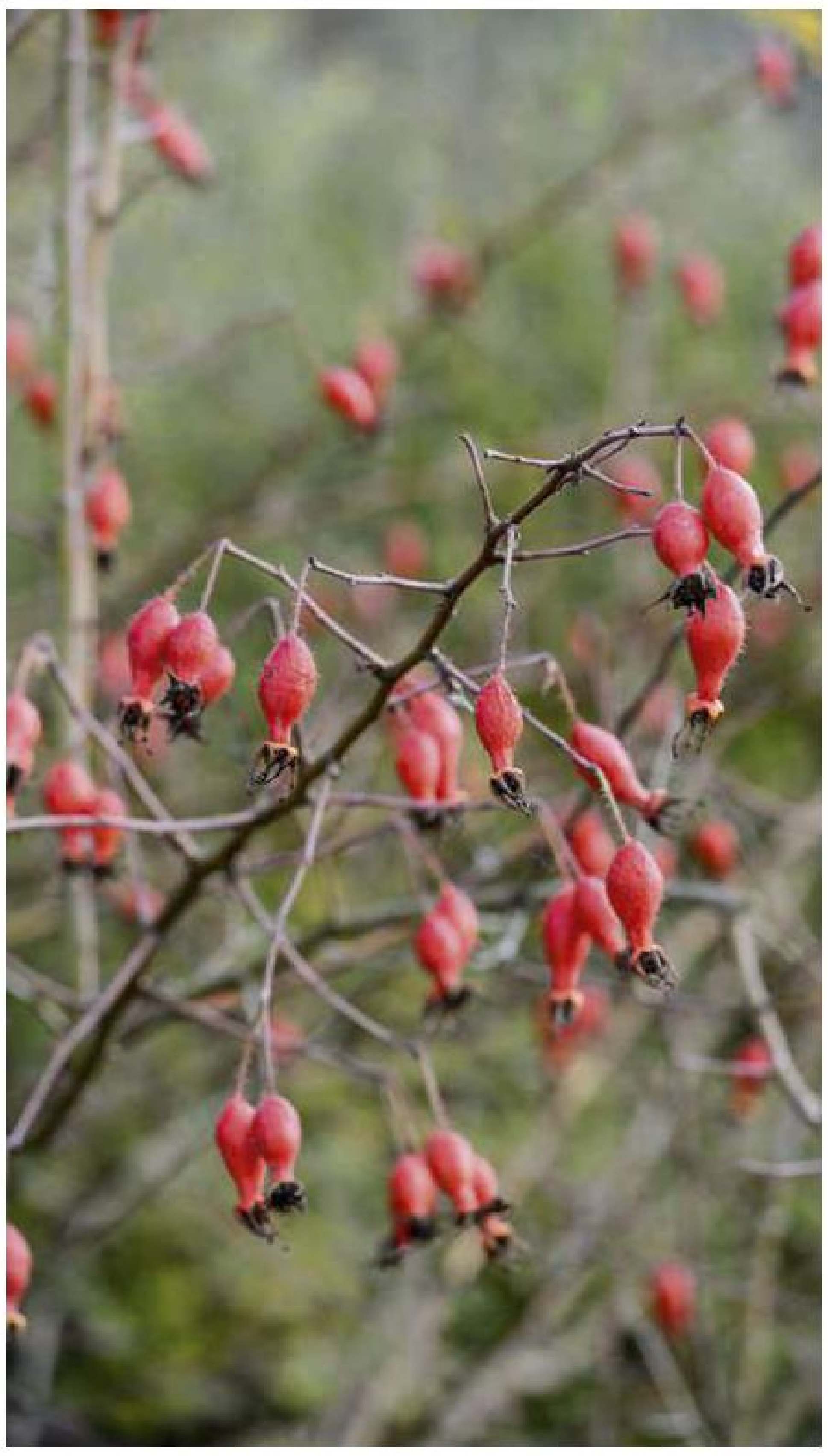
Miscanthus is generally thought of as a robust and solid grass for the back of a border, but this species has a delicacy that can elude more vigorous miscanthus and gracefully achieves a height of only around 1.5m. During November, the plumes have an elegance when they sway in the breeze and display an ease of movement and transparency that is incredibly appealing. If you believe there is no room for grasses in your garden then I suggest you give this one a try. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

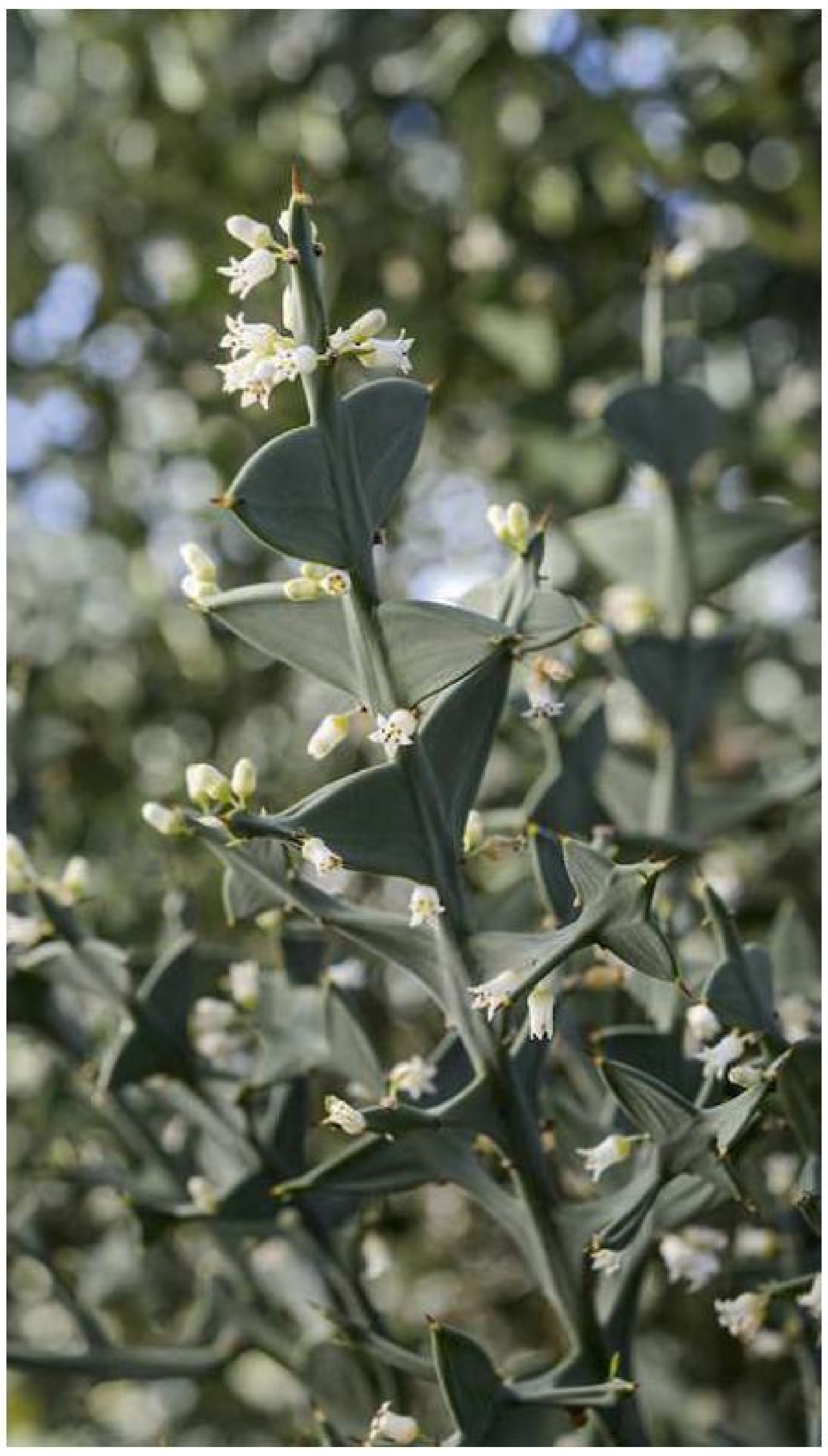
Height 1-1.5m.
Origin Himalayas.
Conditions Well-drained, reasonable garden soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-8b.
Season of interest Late summer flowering; seedheads into winter.

ROSA 'GERANIUM'

This much-loved *R. moyesii* hybrid is incredibly robust and disease resistant. In summer it has large, delicately fragrant, bright-red blooms that in September make way for attention-grabbing red hips to bring a final hurrah to your beds and borders. Achieving a height of around two metres, it's extremely effective at the back of a mixed border, patiently waiting in the background for its moment in the late autumn, when as perennials begin to fade, it reveals its fruitful beauty in all of its glory. AGM*.

Height 1.5-2m.
Origin Garden origin (species China).
Conditions Moist but well-drained, fertile soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Flowering during the summer, fruiting autumn into winter.





COLLETIA PARADOXA

A plant that won't be to everyone's taste. In late autumn and winter its small, white flowers – which appear among a fortress of spines – have a sweet, almost honey and almond-like scent that is quite enchanting. On closer observation – but be careful, not to get too close – you'll see that what on first glance appear to be the leaves are actually modified triangular stems. The true leaves are small and often appear in spring. If you're intrigued, there's a wonderful specimen in the winter garden of Hillier's in Hampshire.

Height 2.5-4m.
Origin Uruguay and southern Brazil.
Conditions Tolerant of most well-drained soils; sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.
Season of interest Early autumn to winter.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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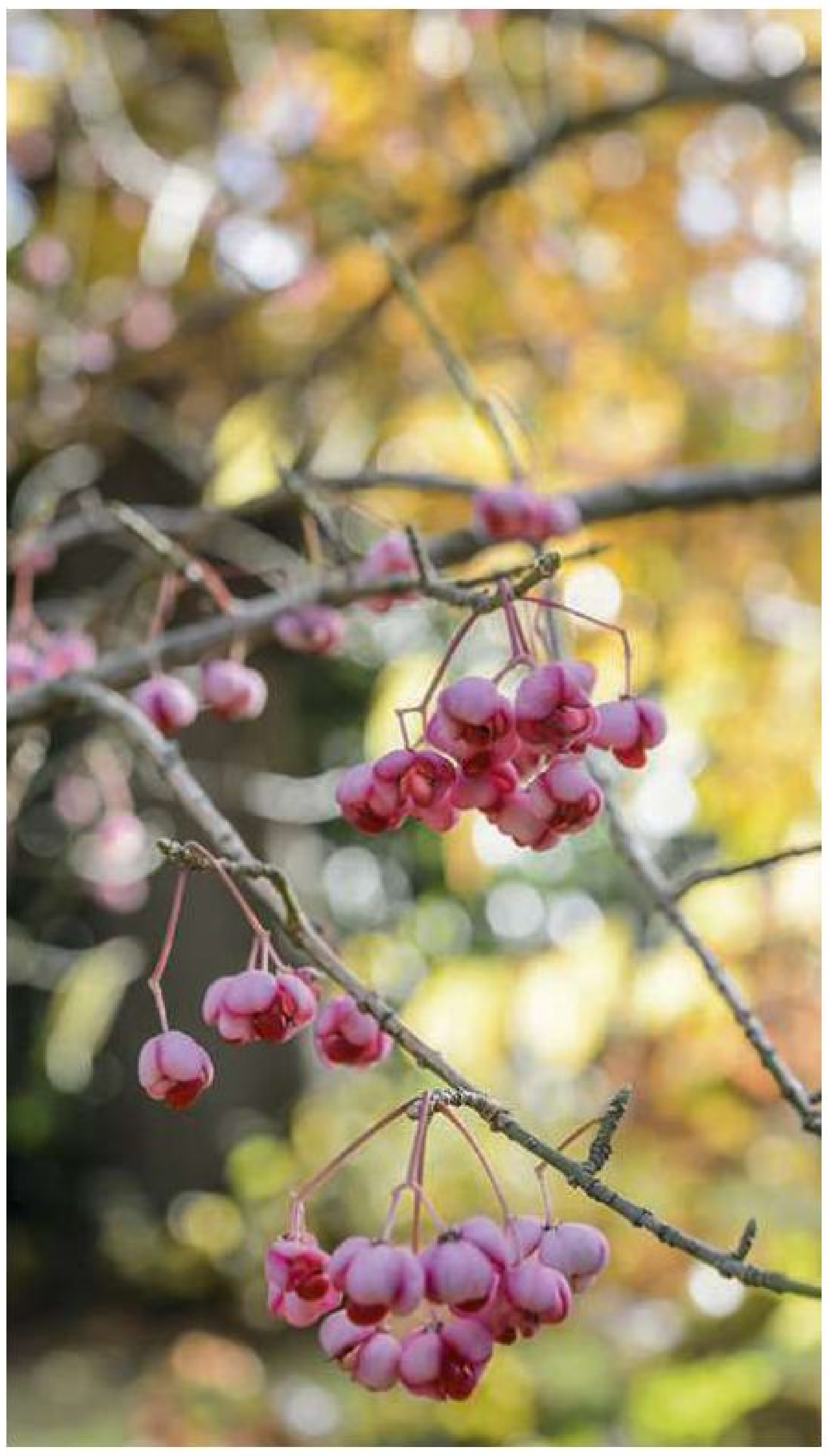


EUONYMUS HAMILTONIANUS SUBSP. *SIEBOLDIANUS* 'CORAL CHARM'

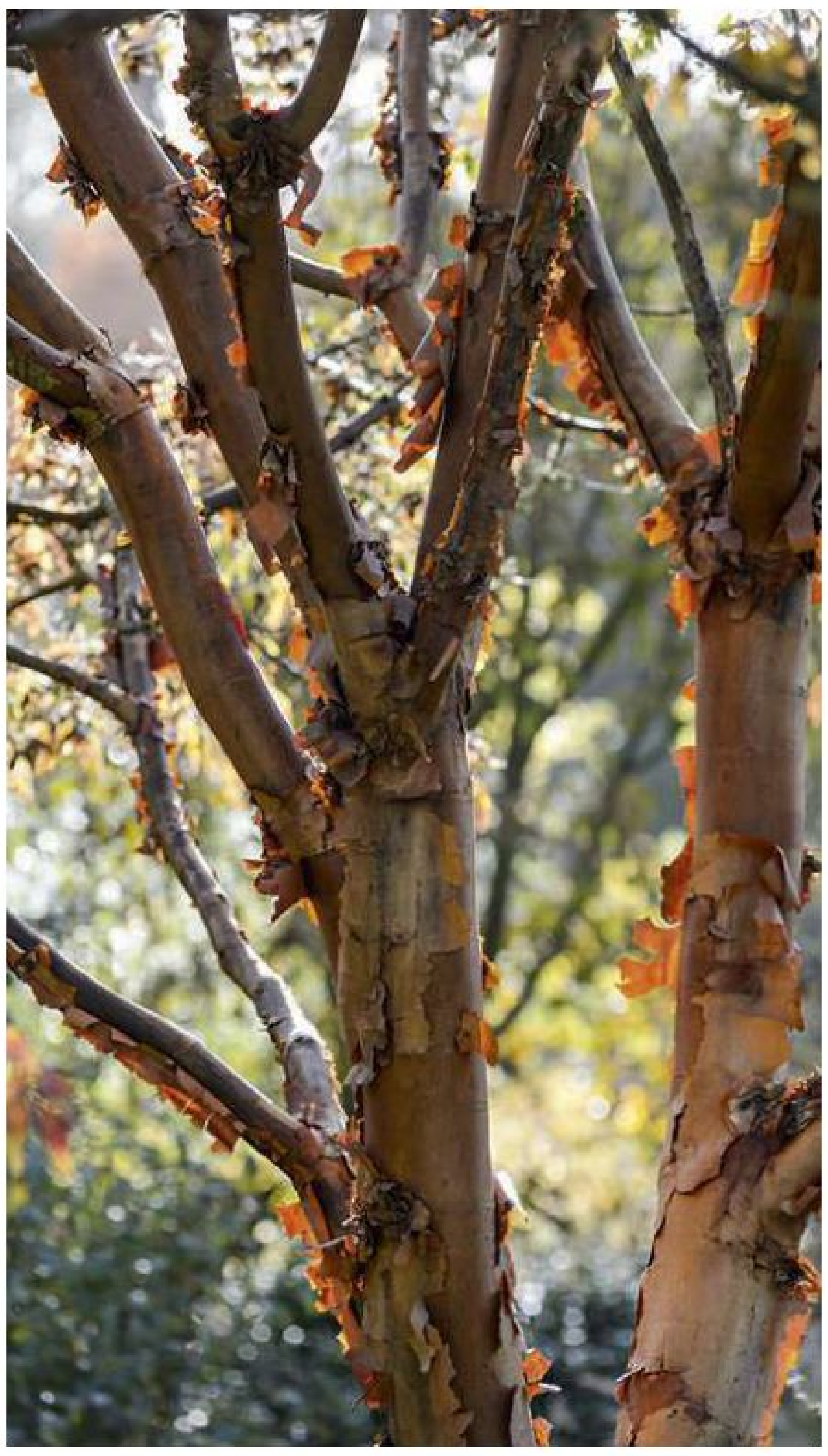
A wonderful, deciduous, tree-like *Euonymus* that has tremendous autumn colour. In cold weather, its leaves gracefully drop to the ground to reveal clusters of coral-pink fruits with orange-red seeds that can persist well into winter, and which are a glorious sight when kissed with frost on a crisp, sunny November day. Makes a super tree for a smaller garden or as a lower-storey shrub in a woodland garden.

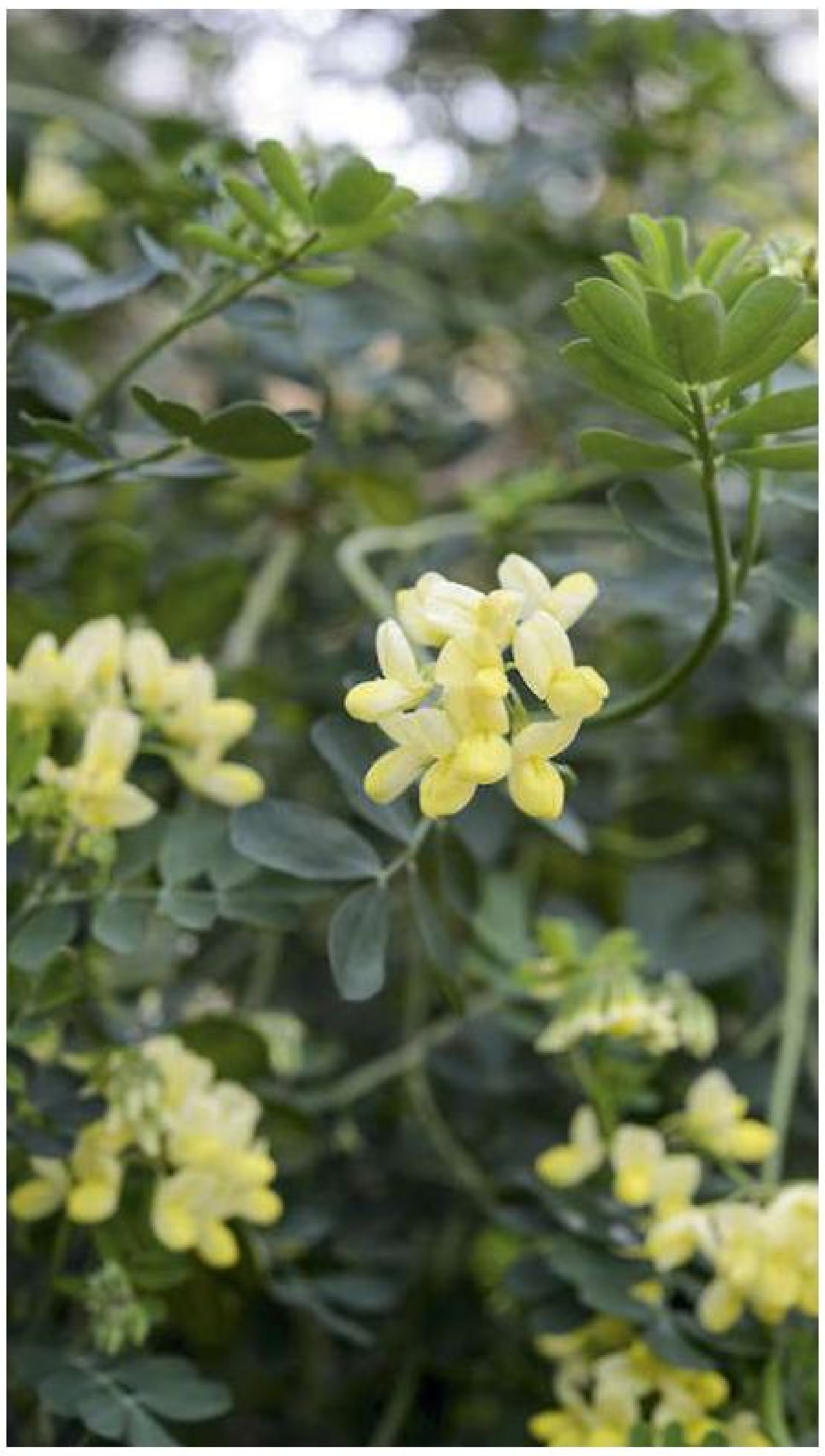
Height 4-8m.
Origin Korea and Japan.
Conditions Moist but free-draining soil; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 7a-8b.
Season of interest Autumn and late winter.

ACER GRISEUM

In late autumn and winter, when its papery, peeling bark is backlit, it has a wonderful translucent quality. For the most dramatic effect, it is best sited where it can be viewed from all angles, and light can penetrate the peeling bark. Introduced from China by the plant hunter Ernest Wilson in 1901, it is slow growing and will struggle in exposed garden situations, but place this paperbark maple in the right site, with the right growing conditions, and you'll be patting yourself on the back for years to come. AGM.

Height 4-8m.
Origin Central China.
Conditions Fertile, moist but well-drained soil; sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest Autumn foliage and winter stem interest.





CORONILLA VALENTINA SUBSP. *GLAUCA* 'CITRINA'

Flowering plants are few and far between at this time of year. Coronillas have soft-yellow flowers that are sweetly citrus scented and appear on stems that scramble and ramble over the ground in a charmingly haphazard way. Coronillas will grow happily in a container with extra grit in the compost to allow plenty of air through the roots in those winter months, but avoid exposed sites, which can become waterlogged in winter. AGM.

Height 50cm-1m.
Origin Garden origin (subspecies from Mediterranean France to Albania).
Conditions Well-drained soil with moisture during the summer; sheltered position in sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 9a-10b.
Season of interest Late autumn and winter.

PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Old Court Nurseries was established by Ernest Ballard in 1906, and from its inception has specialised in breeding new strains of asters. Percy Picton arrived in 1947 to assist Ballard eventually taking over the business. Today Percy's son Paul runs the nursery, and attached Picton Garden, with his wife Meriel and daughter Helen. It still offers a huge diversity of asters available both to buy and see in a garden setting with other perennials and shrubs. Visit and you're sure to come back with a great range of plants. Old Court Nurseries and the Picton Garden, Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6QE. Tel 01684 540416, autumnasters.co.uk

To understand the diversity of any group of plants, you need to find a place where you come away feeling more educated and competent in the cultivation of that group. For grasses this place is **Knoll Gardens** in Dorset. Neil Lucas and his team have developed a fantastic range of grasses and honed methods of cultivation so that the rest of us can more easily use them in different environments. Here in the gardens they are seamlessly associated with shrubs, trees and other perennials to great effect. Knoll Gardens, Stapehill Road, Hampreston, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7ND. Tel 01202 873931, knollgardens.co.uk

Located close to the Thames – enjoying central London's microclimate – the opulent herbaceous borders of the **Inner** ▷

GALACTITES TOMENTOSA

In midsummer, this milk thistle produces scented, purple flowers that are much loved by bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects. But it's in autumn and winter when you can really appreciate its stunning crisp, white-and-green variegated foliage. It is among the most stunning foliage found in gardens during November. This thistle adores free-draining, sun-rich locations in the garden and, once established, has great drought-tolerant qualities. I find it best to collect the seed and sow them straight away as viability can be erratic.

Height 50cm-1m.
Origin Mediterranean and southwestern Europe.
Conditions Free draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 9a-10b.
Season of interest Flowering in summer but excellent crisp foliage in winter.

PRUNUS INCISA 'KOJO-NO-MAI'

Few plants can rival a cherry tree when in full bloom, but this one also has flame-like autumn foliage to give the blossom a run for its money. If you have only a small garden then it pays to demand more from your plants, and this compact *Prunus* not only gives two bursts of interest it also offers great winter structure. But, trust me, once you see it in late autumn, backlit by the crisp autumn light, you'll want this tree for your garden. AGM.

Height 1.5-2.5m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Japan).
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil in sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 7a-8b.
Season of interest Spring flowering and colourful autumn foliage.

ABELIA X *GRANDIFLORA*

Plants that have become popular garden fixtures can easily be overlooked in favour of something new and unknown. But sometimes, it's worth reminding ourselves that plants such as *Abelia* x *grandiflora* have remained popular for a reason. It is incredibly versatile, providing structure and soft-pink flowers from early summer to late autumn. Given a reasonable garden soil, it is trouble free and stands strong with glossy foliage. A plant that offers structure without compromising colour and flowers.

Height 2.5-4m.
Origin Garden hybrid between *A. chinensis* and *A. uniflora*.
Conditions Fertile, moist but well-drained soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Flowering from early summer into late autumn.

▷ **Temple Garden** offer an extended season where visitors can revel in their colour well into the late autumn and winter. Shrewd, successional planting gives exotic plants, annuals and late-flowering perennials centre stage in the 70m herbaceous borders, where head gardener Sean Harkin experiments with colour and innovative plant combinations. The gardens also include a Mediterranean Garden, a magnificent avenue of plane trees and a woodland garden. The Inner Temple Gardens, London EC4Y 9AY. innertemple.org.uk

Early November is often the best time to enjoy rich, autumn colours and one of the finest places to see this colour is **Westonbirt, The National Arboretum**. Home to around 2,500 species of tree from around the world, Westonbirt boasts five National Collections including *Acer palmatum*, comprising nearly 300 specimens. Managed by the Forestry Commission, the grounds are Grade I-listed and divided into two areas: the Old Arboretum laid out along stately avenues, and Silk Wood, with meandering paths through what is effectively a working woodland. Westonbirt Arboretum, Westonbirt, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QS. Tel 0300 067 4890, forestryengland.uk/westonbirt-the-national-arboretum.

Howick Hall Arboretum opened in 2006 with 65 acres of trees and shrubs, which have predominantly been grown from seed. Mature beech trees dominate the landscape but the modern, exotic plantings continue to come to the fore. The pathways are mostly grass, so good footwear is essential, particularly in wet weather. And keep your eyes peeled for red squirrels. Howick Hall Gardens and Arboretum, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 3LB. Tel 01665 577285, howickhallgardens.com

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The Outsider

Horticulturist Hannah Gardner heads north to the Outer Hebrides, where wildflowers buzz with insect life, and comes away inspired to grow its native, white wild rose

WORDS HANNAH GARDNER ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

The Outer Hebrides are a remote and outstandingly beautiful and diverse chain of islands off the northwest of Scotland. Scientists describe their sustainably managed, species-rich dune grasslands as one of the rarest habitats in Europe and they have been awarded Site of Special Scientific Interest status. For much of the year this land provides sparse grazing for the crofters' livestock, but in summer the machair – the Gaelic name for a fertile, low-lying grassy plain – is a luxurious and abundant carpet of bright wildflowers buzzing with insect life and the air is full of threatened birds, such as corncrakes.

The islands' sand dunes are stabilised by banks of marram grass. They protect the flat, fragile thin-soiled land behind them, but during the thousands of years since the last ice age, powerful Atlantic gales have blown ashore fine fragments of crushed calcareous seashell mixed with sand. Falling beyond the dunes this has enriched the soils, and the land has long been farmed using the traditional non-intensive method of crofting (where pesticides and chemical fertilisers are not used). The ground is worked in rotation, providing regular opportunities for annual plantss to seed and establish. Washed-up seaweed is used as fertiliser and soil improver, and carefully ploughed into cultivated areas.

Inspiration for the trip

As an undergraduate in Aberdeen, I fell for Scotland and discovered the Aberdonian horticulturist and botanical artist Mary McMurtrie. She wrote her first book – the inspiring *Wild Flowers of Scotland* – in 1982, aged 80, and became recognised as the oldest working artist in Britain. Her *Scots Roses of Hedgerows and Wild Gardens* is the best source of illustrations for Scots roses.

When to go

The prolific populations of primrose, marsh marigold and flag iris bloom in May. The machair grassland flowers from June to early September. It is best to plan well ahead as transport and accommodation are limited and fill up quickly.

Where to go

A walk of just a few miles in South Uist will allow you to explore the coastal machair, pass through the transitional croft-line (where the croft cottages are) and on to the moors of Loch Druidibeg, home to nesting wading birds and golden eagles. Here tough plants have colonised the peat bog, adapting to the low-nutrient content of damp, acidic soil. Look closely and the sombre expanses yield plenty of colour; violet-flowered butterworts (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), the golden blooms of tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) and bog aspodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), a distant relative to both irises and lilies. The pink lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*) and heath spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza maculata*) also grow here.

Tiny flashes of blue are the common and heath milkworts (*Polygala serpyllifolia*). Cotton grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) is perhaps the most chameleon of all, with silky and lustrous tassels of antique white in the sun, or grubby forlorn mop heads in the rain. Heath and heathers dominate but among them are low clusters of woody bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*) exuding a sweet, resinous smell that is good for keeping midges away.

Both fallow and crop areas of machair can be species rich, a riot of corn marigold (*Glebionis segetum*), buttercups, useful red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) that enriches the grassland by trapping atmospheric nitrogen in its roots to form nitrate in the soil, glowing kidney vetch, harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*) and knapweed, which is a favourite of bees.

The coastal hamlet of Northton on Harris has an exhilarating hike that winds through acres of machair and on up to the peak of Ceapabhal (368m).

The views of the vast azure expanse of Luskentyre Bay below and the bright tangle of flowering machair are unforgettable. Iris and marsh marigold colonise damp pockets alongside the less familiar bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), a robust and medicinally useful plant of fresh water, its stiff, leathery foliage an odd contrast to prettily fringed, arresting flowerheads.

Plant to grow at home

It is best to appreciate the machair flora as a habitat, and not select one species to try at home. However, a pretty little rose caught my eye while I was on Harris, and November is the bare root rose planting season. *Rosa spinosissima* is the traditional white rose of Scotland, eulogised in song and poetry and second only to the Scottish thistle in emblematic renown. It came into cultivation at the very end of the 18th century and by 1820 hundreds of double forms had been selected. Gertrude Jekyll was fond of Scots roses, frequently using them in her gardens.

The most northerly of any wild rose, *Rosa spinosissima* is a hardy, prickly stemmed, deciduous shrub teeming with small, creamy white, fragrant flowers. Its common name, burnet rose, comes from the close resemblance of its compound foliage to the herb burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*), this forms a lovely fresh foil for the deep-purple-black globular hips that follow. These were traditionally used in the dying of local cloth. A plant of poor land, in the wild it forms dense patches on sand dunes and sandy heaths, venturing further inland on limestone soils. In the garden select a location exposed to full sun, it is unfussy about soil, is wind tolerant and drought resistant once established. This is a lovely rose for wilder areas of the garden, its low growing habit making it ideal groundcover. □

Guides and maps

Scottish Wild Flowers by Michael Scott (Collins Guides, 2000).
Grouped into habitats, with their Latin, English and Gaelic names.
OS Explorer 455 South Harris

Where to stay

Scarista House
Sgarasta Bheag, Isle of Harris HS3 3HX.
Tel 01859 550238, scaristahouse.com
A handsome and beautifully run, small hotel overlooking a breathtaking beachscape.
Bagh Alluin
21 Baleshare, Isle of North Uist HS6 5HG.
Tel 01876 580370, jacvolbeda.co.uk
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GARDENING TALENT

Coralie Thomas

A key member of the garden team at Great Dixter, New-York native Coralie arrived in the UK in 2016 as the Chanticleer North American Christopher Lloyd Scholarship student

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love I got into horticulture through organic-vegetable farming so my first plant love was probably the first beetroot I ever grew. It blew me away that you could do that kind of thing and I thought the beetroots were so beautiful.
Who has inspired your career? First, Gelene Scarborough at Wave Hill in New York who exposed me to a whole world of plants and why it's important to care for a garden. And now, Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter who has been an incredible mentor to myself and others.
Favourite landscape I love the colours in the landscape of the American West in places such as Utah, Montana and Colorado. I first saw wildflowers, such as the mountain paintbrush *Castilleja miniata*, while hiking in Glacier National Park in Montana. I instantly fell in love with it and it made me want to learn more about the world of plants.
A worthwhile tip for every gardener Don't be afraid to let your freak flag fly a bit when it comes to planting. I think 90 per cent of a strong display comes from well-grown, good performing plants, but the ten per cent when somebody does something unusual or unexpected is what makes it really exciting.
Instagram fix I follow two related accounts about the vegetation growing in cities. One is @weedalogue, which is creating a catalogue of all the plants growing out of bits of paving cracks in Philadelphia. It's interesting to see what things grow in those harsh conditions and by profiling them the account draws attention to their value to the urban ecosystem rather than just seeing them as weeds. The second is @spontaneousurbanplants, which often highlights ways in which this spontaneous vegetation has been used or could be used in landscape design projects.
Favourite planting style I'm quite drawn to the planting style at Great Dixter, which still feels like magic to me. Even though we often use a lot of highly cultivated plants, the whole garden has a loose, wild and natural feel to it. It's like a surreal trick.
Biggest challenge facing gardeners today Being honest about our environmental footprint. Although horticulture is a profession that works with plants and the land, a lot of our work is very resource intensive and is not necessarily beneficial for the environment. We need to figure out ways to change that.
Contact coraliemlthomas@gmail.com, Instagram @coraliemlthomas

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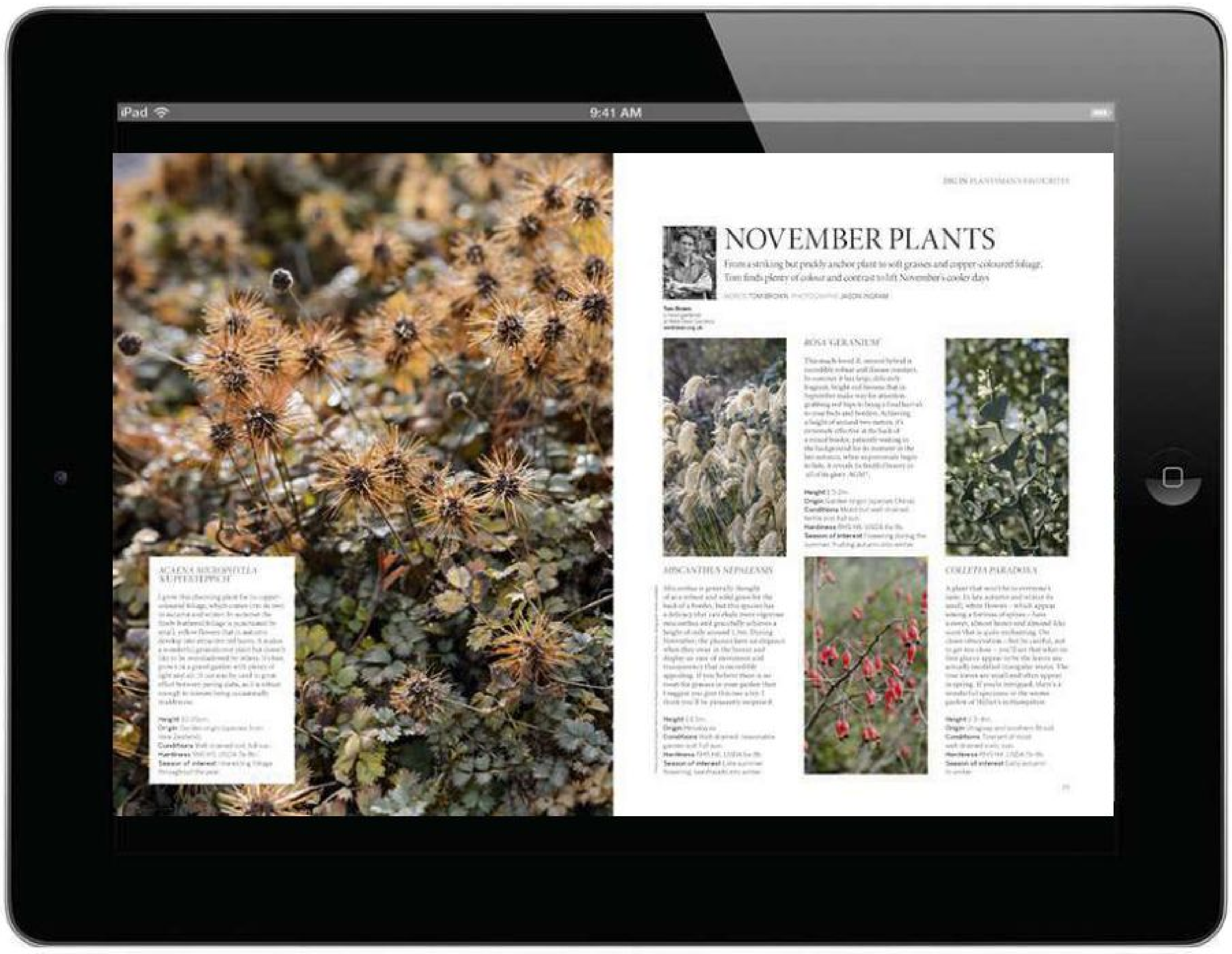
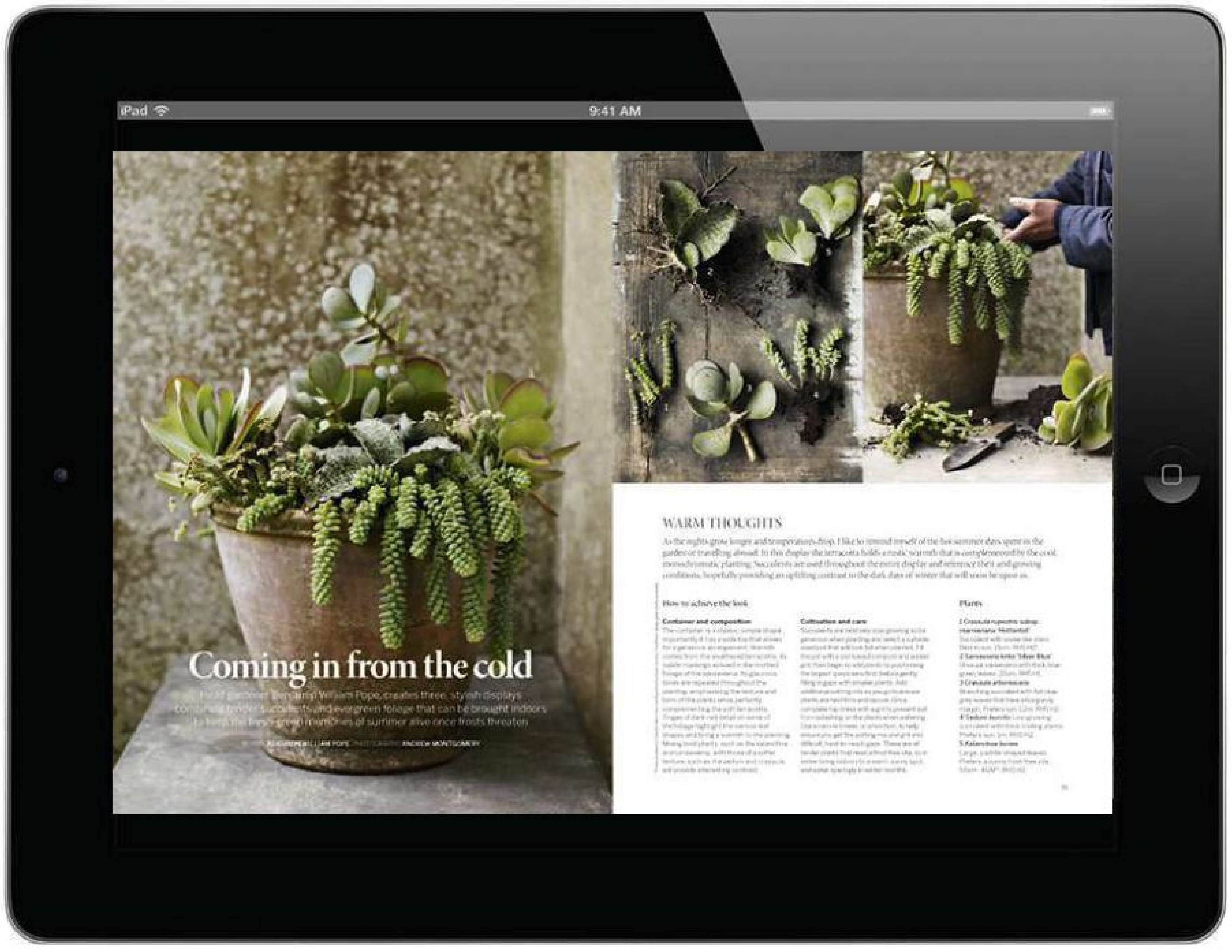

NOVEMBER PLANTS

History lessons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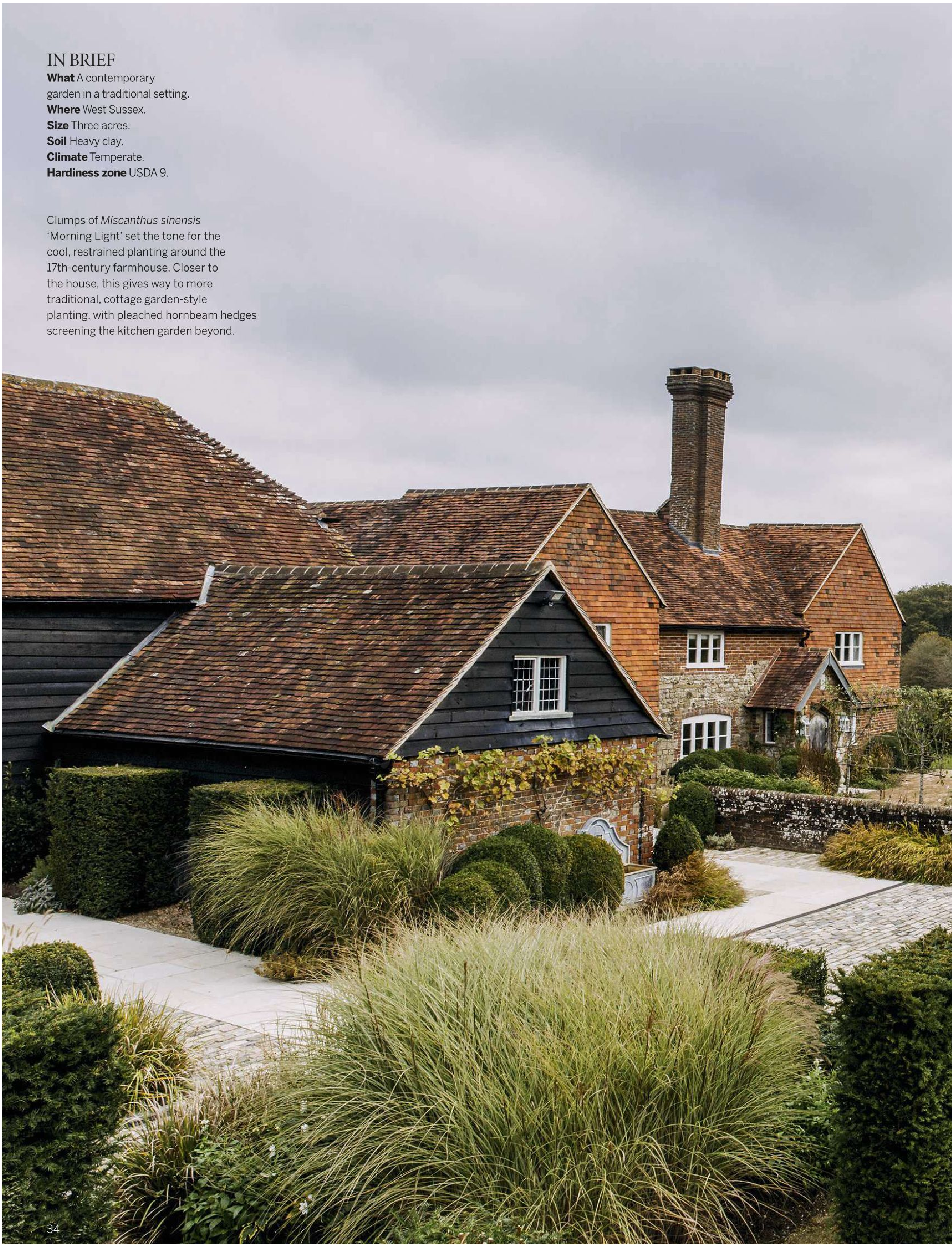
IN BRIEF

What A contemporary garden in a traditional setting.
Where West Sussex.
Size Three acres.
Soil Heavy clay.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.



Clumps of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' set the tone for the cool, restrained planting around the 17th-century farmhouse. Closer to the house, this gives way to more traditional, cottage garden-style planting, with pleached hornbeam hedges screening the kitchen garden beyond.

History lessons

Around a 17th-century farmhouse in West Sussex, designer Chris Moss has created a contemporary garden that builds on the house's past

WORDS **RORY DUSOIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **EVA NEMETH**

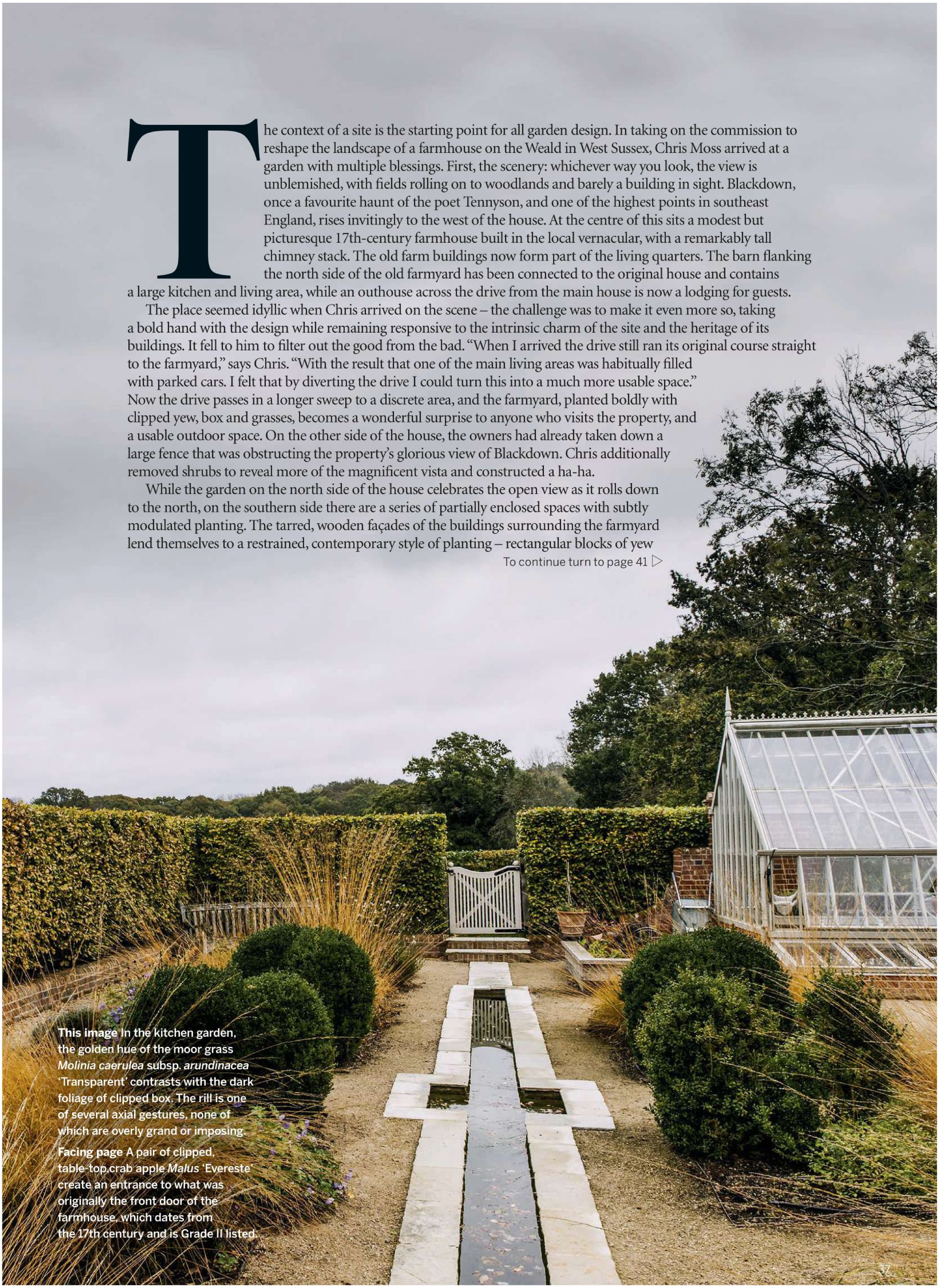
The place seemed idyllic when Chris arrived on the scene – the challenge was to make it even more so

The context of a site is the starting point for all garden design. In taking on the commission to reshape the landscape of a farmhouse on the Weald in West Sussex, Chris Moss arrived at a garden with multiple blessings. First, the scenery: whichever way you look, the view is unblemished, with fields rolling on to woodlands and barely a building in sight. Blackdown, once a favourite haunt of the poet Tennyson, and one of the highest points in southeast England, rises invitingly to the west of the house. At the centre of this sits a modest but picturesque 17th-century farmhouse built in the local vernacular, with a remarkably tall chimney stack. The old farm buildings now form part of the living quarters. The barn flanking the north side of the old farmyard has been connected to the original house and contains a large kitchen and living area, while an outhouse across the drive from the main house is now a lodging for guests.

The place seemed idyllic when Chris arrived on the scene – the challenge was to make it even more so, taking a bold hand with the design while remaining responsive to the intrinsic charm of the site and the heritage of its buildings. It fell to him to filter out the good from the bad. "When I arrived the drive still ran its original course straight to the farmyard," says Chris. "With the result that one of the main living areas was habitually filled with parked cars. I felt that by diverting the drive I could turn this into a much more usable space." Now the drive passes in a longer sweep to a discrete area, and the farmyard, planted boldly with clipped yew, box and grasses, becomes a wonderful surprise to anyone who visits the property, and a usable outdoor space. On the other side of the house, the owners had already taken down a large fence that was obstructing the property's glorious view of Blackdown. Chris additionally removed shrubs to reveal more of the magnificent vista and constructed a ha-ha.

While the garden on the north side of the house celebrates the open view as it rolls down to the north, on the southern side there are a series of partially enclosed spaces with subtly modulated planting. The tarred, wooden façades of the buildings surrounding the farmyard lend themselves to a restrained, contemporary style of planting – rectangular blocks of yew

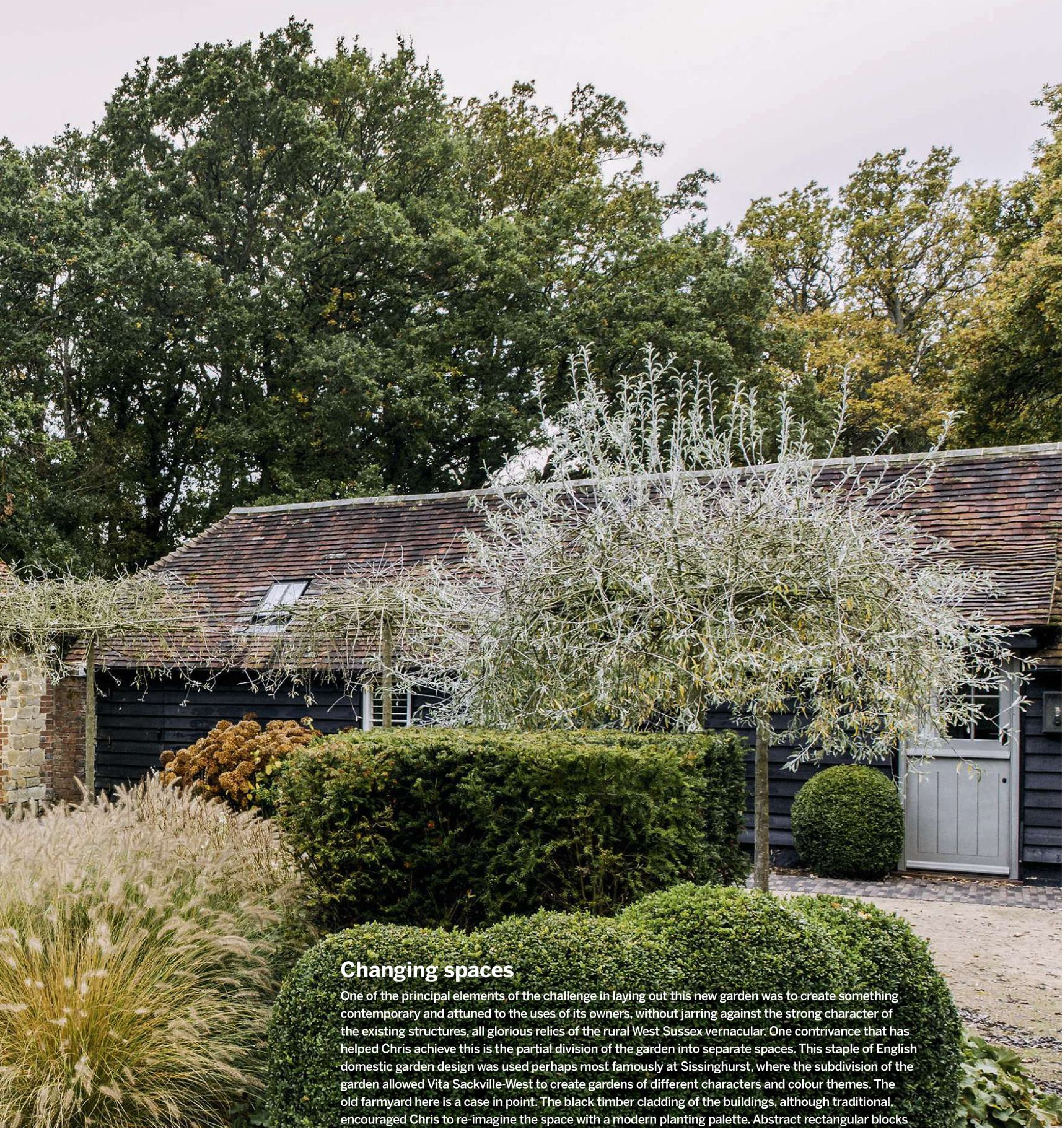
To continue turn to page 41 ▷



This image In the kitchen garden, the golden hue of the moor grass *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' contrasts with the dark foliage of clipped box. The rill is one of several axial gestures, none of which are overly grand or imposing.

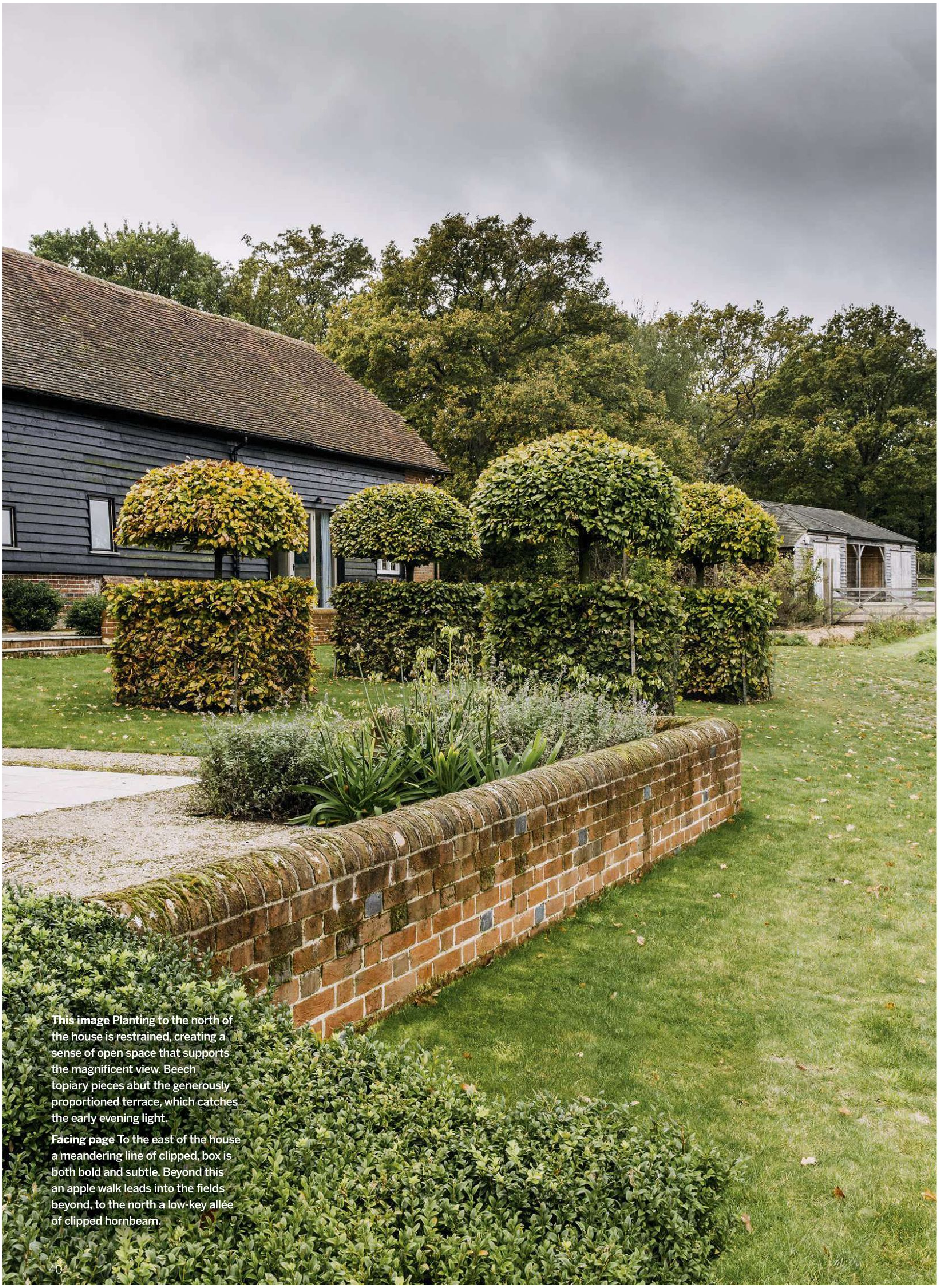
Facing page A pair of clipped, table-top crab apple *Malus* 'Evereste' create an entrance to what was originally the front door of the farmhouse, which dates from the 17th century and is Grade II listed.

The tarred, wooden façades of the buildings lend themselves to a restrained, contemporary style of planting



Changing spaces

One of the principal elements of the challenge in laying out this new garden was to create something contemporary and attuned to the uses of its owners, without jarring against the strong character of the existing structures, all glorious relics of the rural West Sussex vernacular. One contrivance that has helped Chris achieve this is the partial division of the garden into separate spaces. This staple of English domestic garden design was used perhaps most famously at Sissinghurst, where the subdivision of the garden allowed Vita Sackville-West to create gardens of different characters and colour themes. The old farmyard here is a case in point. The black timber cladding of the buildings, although traditional, encouraged Chris to re-imagine the space with a modern planting palette. Abstract rectangular blocks of yew dominate the planting and enhance the shimmering lightness of grasses, such as *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' and *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln'. Colour is restricted to green or white. It is a fine example of how a planting can create or enhance the 'mood' in a given area – and how radically the mood can shift in response to the context within one garden.



This image Planting to the north of the house is restrained, creating a sense of open space that supports the magnificent view. Beech topiary pieces abut the generously proportioned terrace, which catches the early evening light.

Facing page To the east of the house a meandering line of clipped, box is both bold and subtle. Beyond this an apple walk leads into the fields beyond, to the north a low-key allée of clipped hornbeam.

▷ populate the space and form a strong visual relationship with the buildings. There is not much colour, with the flower palette restricted to green and white, but the silver foliage of four weeping pears (*Pyrus salicifolia*), trained and pruned to form a canopy, exert a strong leavening effect, as does the wonderfully pale and slender-leaved *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' and the shimmering sward of *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln'.

In the area surrounding the front door of the house, there is less coolness and restraint in the choice of herbaceous flora. "I felt that so close to a traditional farmhouse like this the planting should more closely resemble that of a traditional cottage garden," says Chris. In the adjoining space, a small ornamental potager, features a contemporary rill and a planting that owes much to the New Perennial Movement with plentiful grasses, including *Molinia caerulea* 'Heidebraut', *M. caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent', *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', and one of Chris's favourite plants, the almost shrub-like perennial *Amsonia tabernaemontana*. Late colour here comes from heleniums, rudbeckias, and the long-lasting contribution of *Persicaria* x *fennica* 'Johanniswolke' (much of its colour deriving from the post-floral display of ripening seed). Late in the season, herbaceous growth is tall; the feeling of being immersed in planting is enhanced by the level change as you step down at the threshold of the garden.

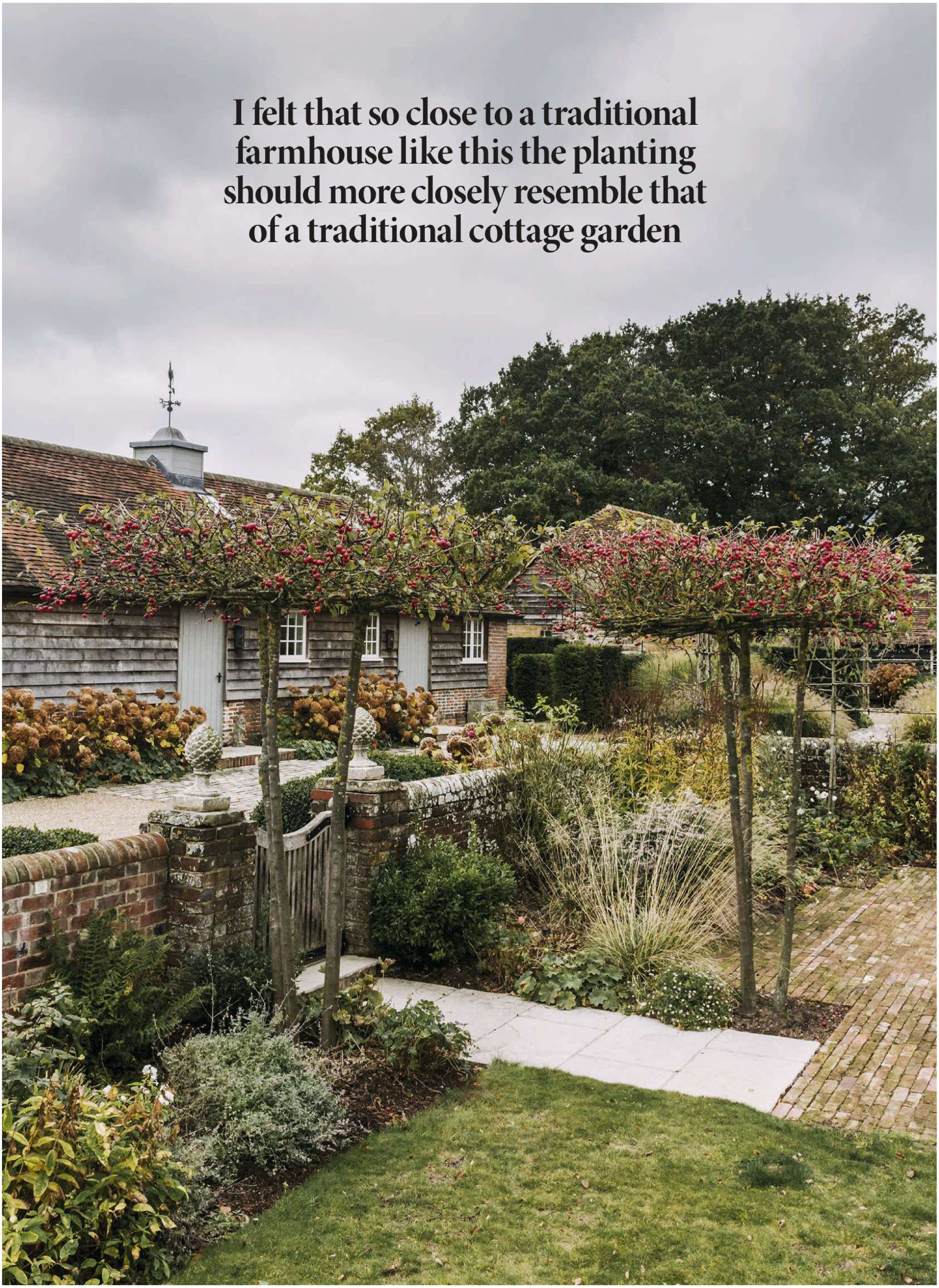
Although each area has its distinct character, the transitions never jar. The partial seclusion of each area helps in this, but Chris has also worked hard to create a subtle sense of continuity. A meandering line of clipped box, equally at home in contemporary plantings as in the more traditional planting around the house, snakes its way through both areas and fosters a feeling of unity. Topiary pieces are used in all three areas and are the most visible elements from afar. Pleached hornbeam hedges help to enclose the kitchen garden, but their forms are also echoed in the rectangular blocks of yew found in the farmyard, and in the clipped *Malus* 'Evereste' that greet visitors at the garden gate.

The sense of enclosure on this side of the garden whets the appetite for the panoramic view that greets you on the other side of the house. Although a degree of geometry is gently imposed in the form of low-key allées, and a group of four topiary beech specimens, the broad vista is allowed to take centre stage, with one's vision unobstructed.
The site is indeed blessed; but with Chris's strong vision and deft hand, its blessings have been multiplied. □

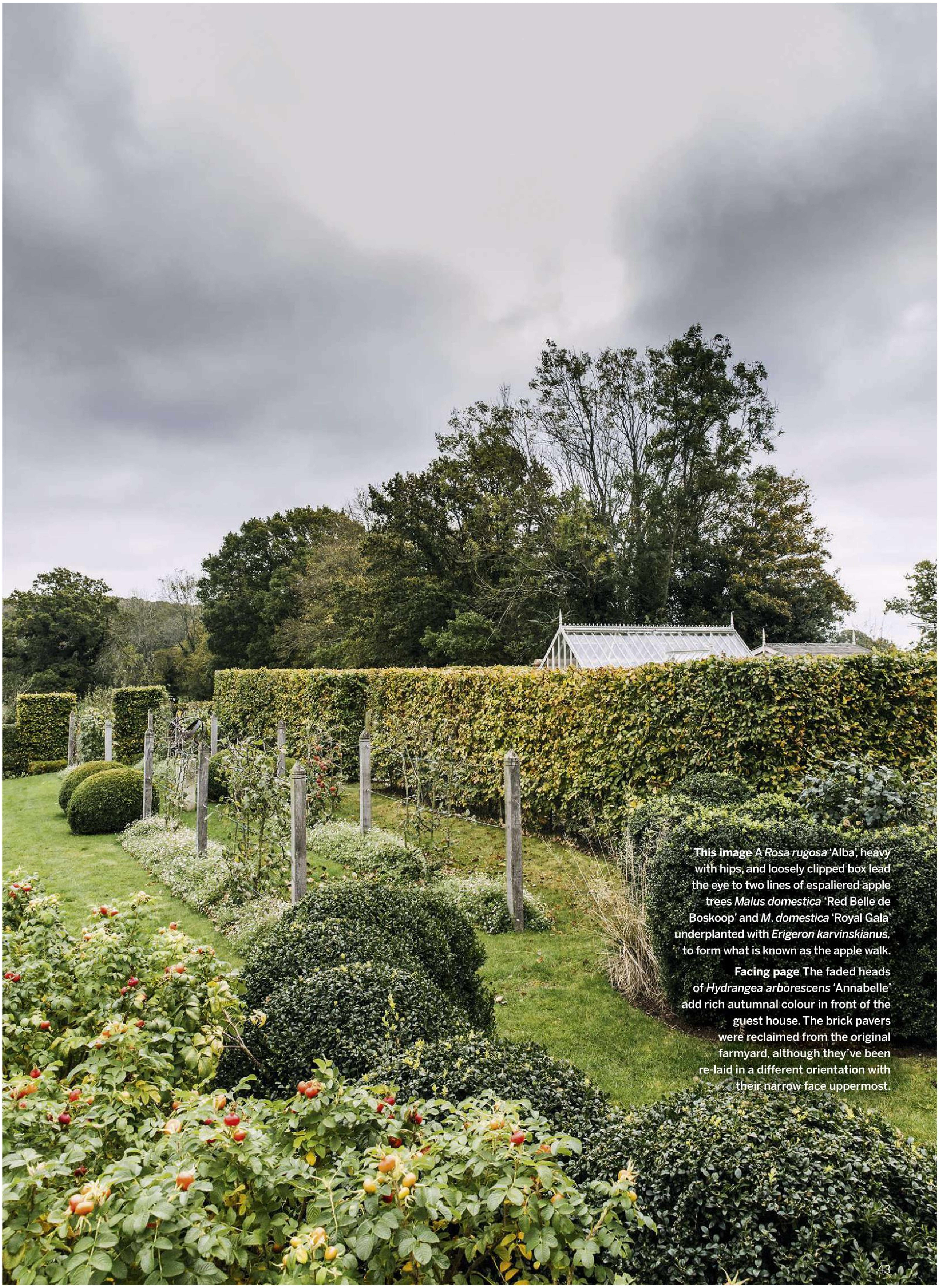
Turn the page for more planting ideas ▷

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Chris's work at **chrismossgardens.com**

A degree of geometry is gently imposed, but the broad vista is allowed to take centre stage, with one's vision unobstructed



I felt that so close to a traditional farmhouse like this the planting should more closely resemble that of a traditional cottage garden



This image A *Rosa rugosa* 'Alba', heavy with hips, and loosely clipped box lead the eye to two lines of espaliered apple trees *Malus domestica* 'Red Belle de Boskoop' and *M. domestica* 'Royal Gala' underplanted with *Erigeron karvinskianus*, to form what is known as the apple walk.

Facing page The faded heads of *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' add rich autumnal colour in front of the guest house. The brick pavers were reclaimed from the original farmyard, although they've been re-laid in a different orientation with their narrow face uppermost.

Colchicum 'Autumn Queen'
One of the first autumn-flowering cultivars to flower. Often nosing through in late August with mid-sized flowers, which thrive in a sunny site. 18cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b†.

COLCHICUM

Delicate, hardy colchicums push up in autumn in unexpectedly refreshing tones

WORDS **ROD LEEDS** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

Large-flowered colchicums flower without their leaves throughout autumn, offering an injection of colour. The flowers vary in colour from white to pale pink and dark purple and can be narrow and slim to large and sturdy goblets on sturdy stems. There are multi-petalled selections in white and purple. In the late 19th century, plant collectors introduced the large-flowered species – *Colchicum speciosum*, *Colchicum giganteum*, *Colchicum bivonae* and the variety *Colchicum speciosum* var. *bornmuelleri* – into European gardens. One bulb grower in particular, JJ Kerbert of Zocher & Co based in the Dutch city of Haarlem, deliberately crossed these species, producing cultivars that are still grown today. Kerbert often used *Colchicum bivonae*, which can be tender as a garden plant, to introduce tessellation into the coloured part of the petal. The cultivar *Colchicum* 'Autumn Queen', a fine early flowering, well-marked cultivar, is now well over 100 years old.

Today there are about 70 named cultivars and 35 autumn-flowering species. Many of the species are difficult to grows. There are also spring-flowering, mostly species colchicums. There have been some extraordinary surprises in the way some colchicums have been introduced into cultivation. One of the first of these was in 1588 when the Flemish botanist Carolus Clusius received corms of *Colchicum byzantinum* while living in Vienna. The corms had been sent from Constantinople, modern-day Istanbul, to two Viennese ladies who passed on offsets to Clusius. Since no one has since found the source of *Colchicum byzantinum* in Turkey, all modern stock is a result of those few original corms. The plant is still very vigorous but has now become infertile.

The origins of the must-grow *Colchicum speciosum* 'Album', are equally fascinating. This appeared just over 100 years ago, as a chance seedling in one of the seed beds of the famous Backhouse Nursery of York. From that one corm all current stock has been produced, and all by natural division. Amazingly no other albino selection of *Colchicum speciosum* has been found. The Backhouse nursery also selected *Colchicum speciosum* 'Atrorubens', which like *Colchicum speciosum* 'Album', holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

During the 20th century the great gardener and author EA Bowles championed the genus in his book *A Handbook of Crocus and Colchicum for Gardeners* published in 1924 with a revised edition in 1952. Bowles was a stickler for correct nomenclature and often bemoaned the fact that colchicums were so inaccurately named. The underlying challenge for botanists is the seasonal difference of flowers in autumn and leaves in spring. The leaf is often just as important as the flower in defining a particular species or cultivar. A thread of historic cultivars was continued after Bowles's death by the late nurserywoman Elizabeth Parker-Jervis. Her father had been a great friend of Bowles and as a young woman Elizabeth had visited Bowles at his Enfield home, Myddelton House. In the latter years of the 20th century, she and her husband Johnny ran P-J Nursery near Oxford, specialising in colchicums and it is through Elizabeth that much material perpetuated.

Between 2014 and 2017, the RHS undertook a trial of autumn-flowering colchicums at RHS Garden Hyde Hall in Essex. The trial included many Dutch selections plus additions from private and botanical gardens, where a few growers had preserved stocks from 20th-century collections.

The interest in colchicums has been taken up by a number of European growers with new plants now coming on the market. Many come from the Netherlands but many more, such as *Colchicum* 'Faberge's Silver' and *Colchicum* 'World Champion's Cup', are from Lithuania. □

• Author Rod Leeds is a writer and expert in autumn-flowering bulbs. His recommendations of the best colchicums for autumn interest can be found over the next five pages. ▷

PLANT PROFILE

What Large, cormous plants with brown tunics that mainly flower in autumn. Commonly known as naked ladies, autumn crocus, and in the USA as false autumn crocuses, which is more accurate.

Origins Asia and Europe, usually in high-altitude meadows.

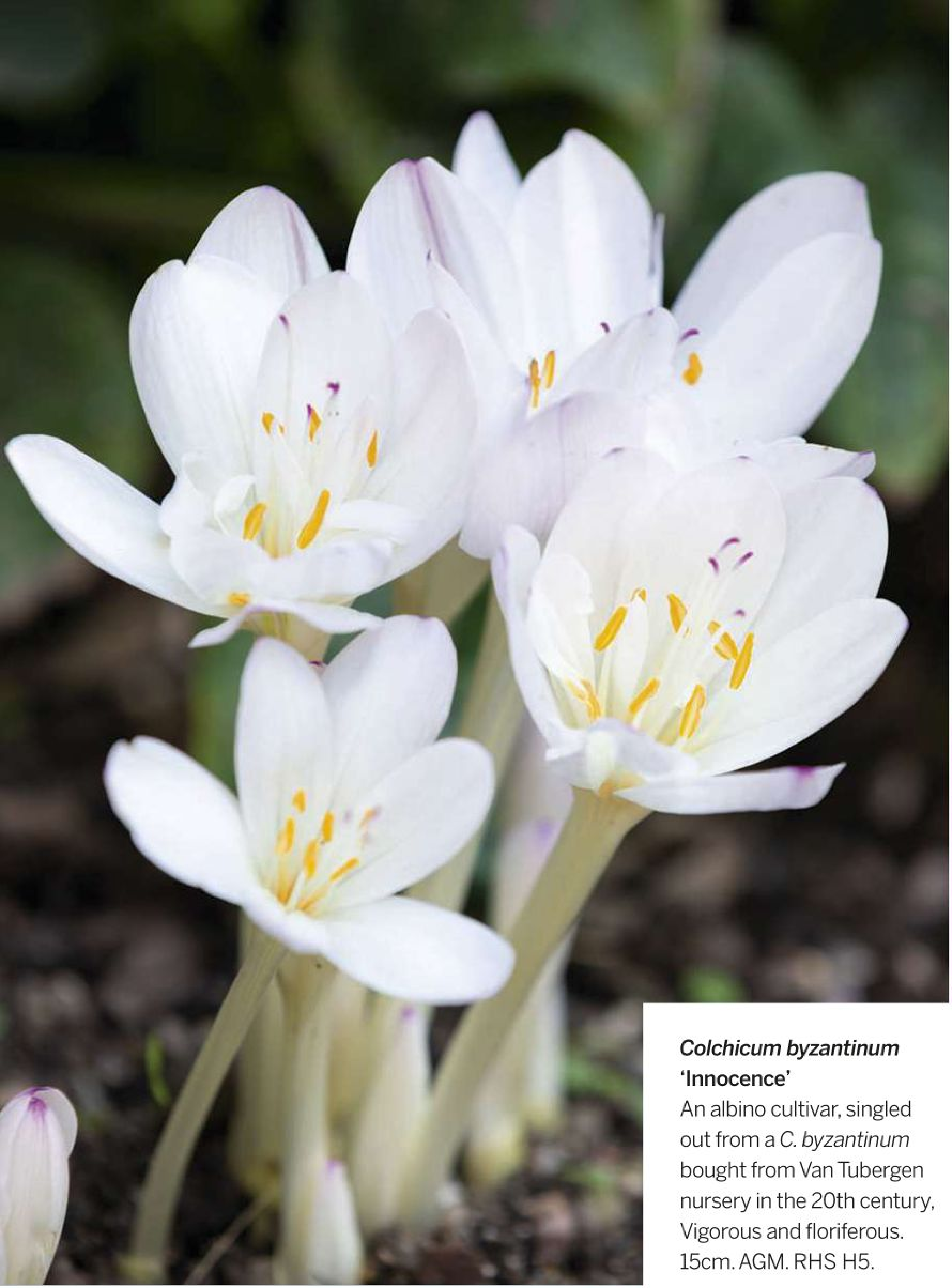
Size Flowers 10-30cm tall in autumn, leaves as tall and spreading in spring.

Conditions Sunny or half-shady position in borders and shrubberies, ideal in long grass, which is only mown from June until the end of August.

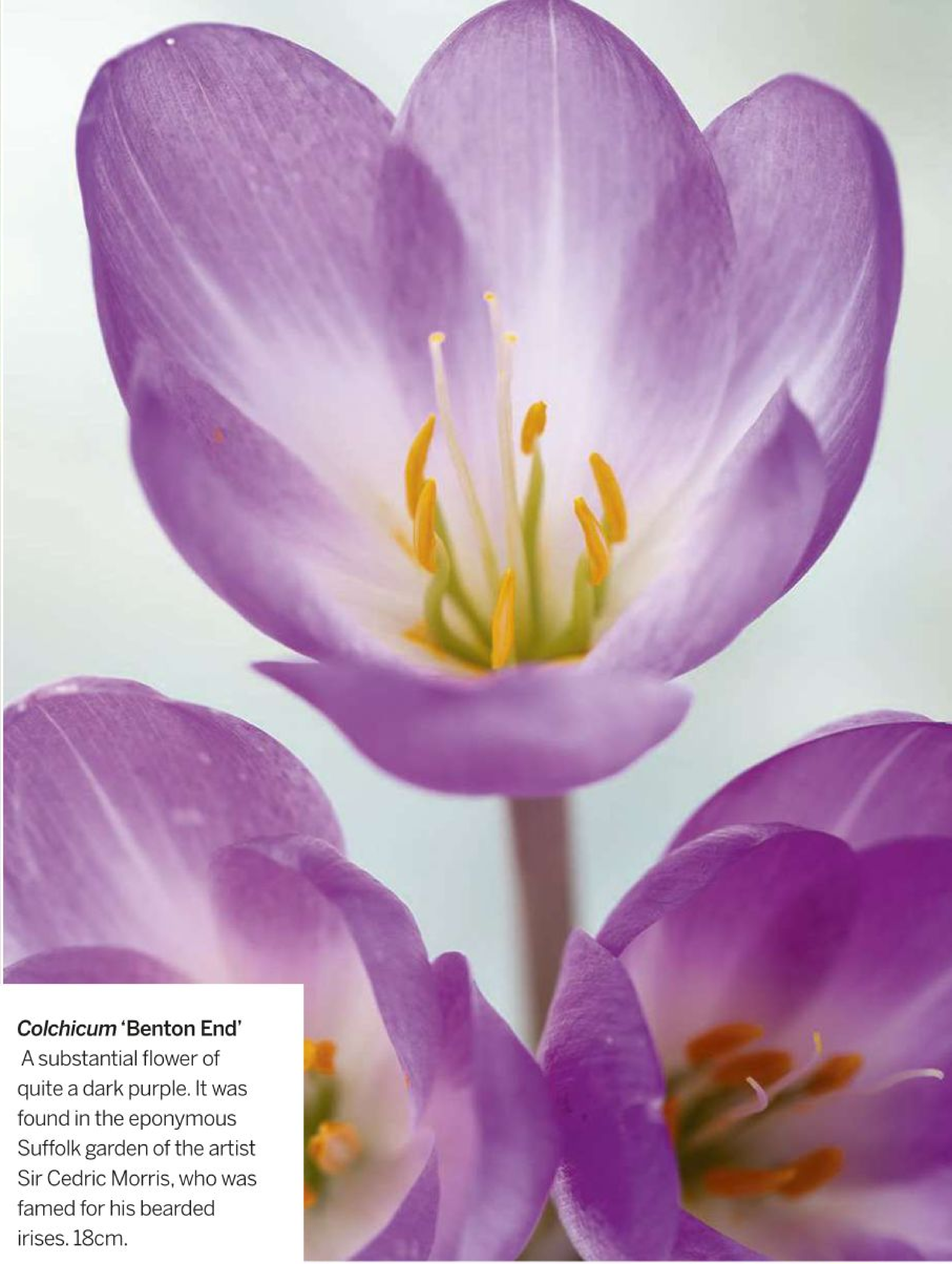
Hardiness rating Most have a rating of RHS H5 and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 4a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

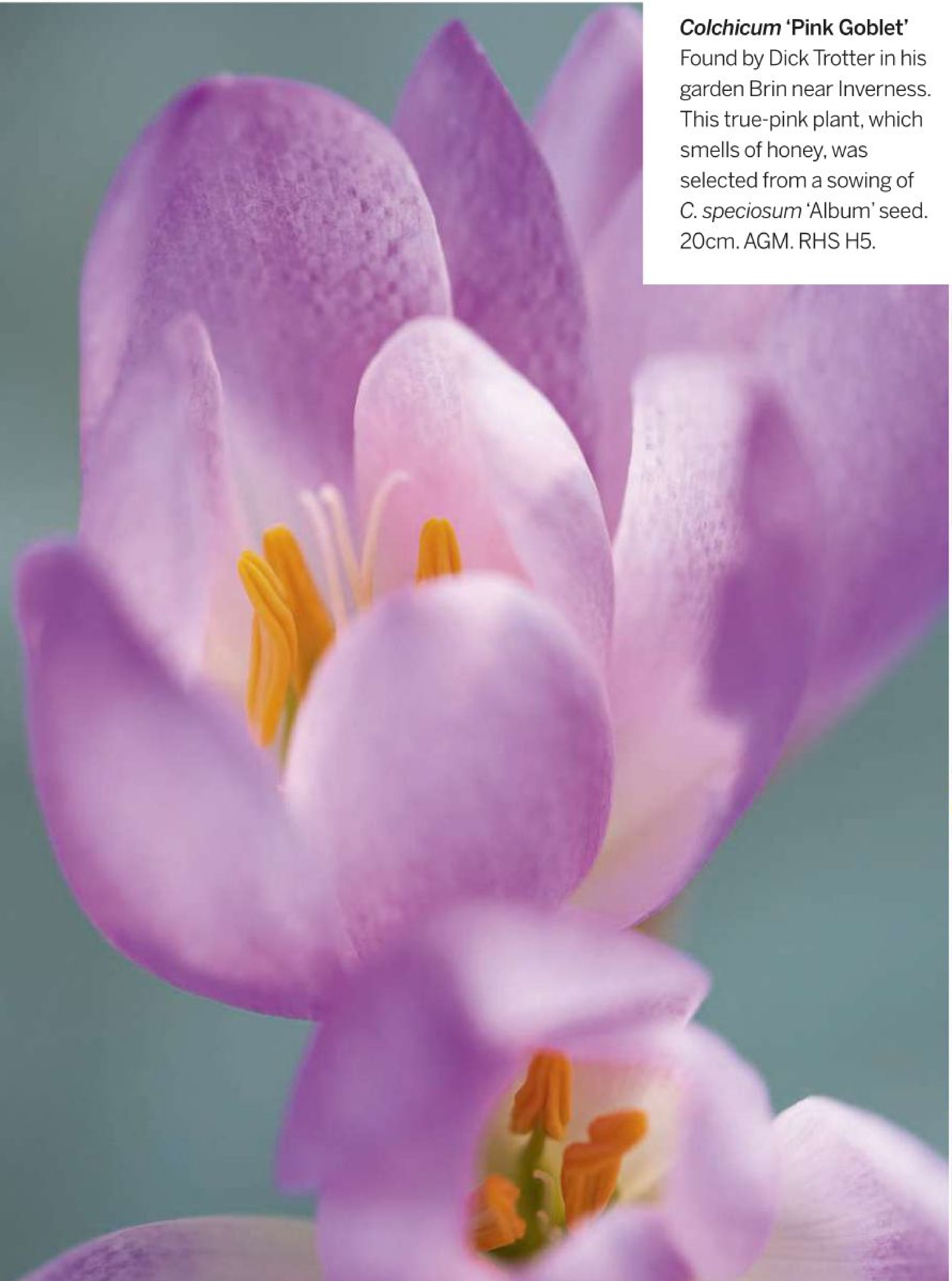
Colchicum x agrippinum
This highly tessellated selection is a hybrid of unknown parentage. It has hybrid vigour with demure leaves in spring. 10cm. AGM. RHS H4.



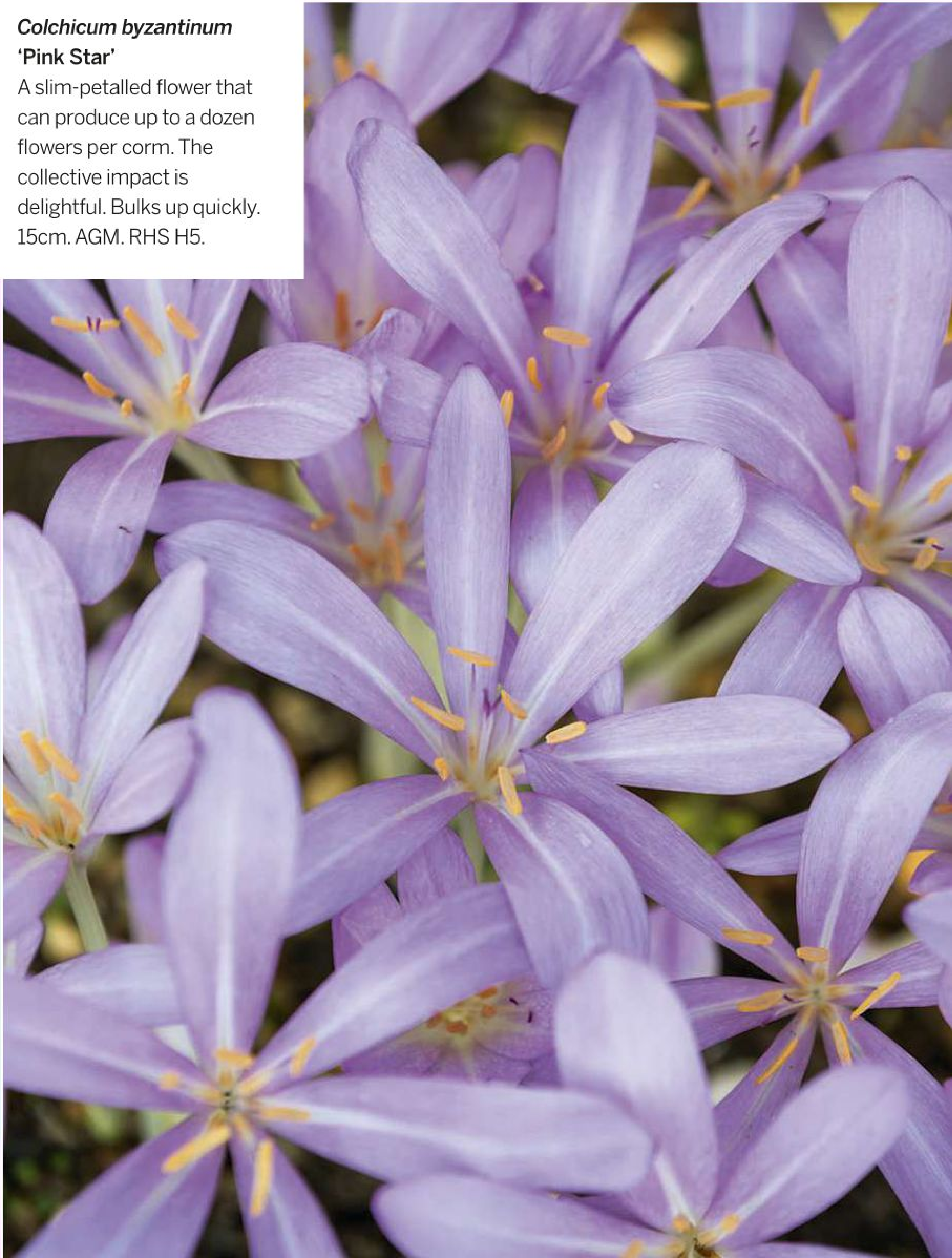
***Colchicum byzantinum* 'Innocence'**
An albino cultivar, singled out from a *C. byzantinum* bought from Van Tubergen nursery in the 20th century. Vigorous and floriferous. 15cm. AGM. RHS H5.



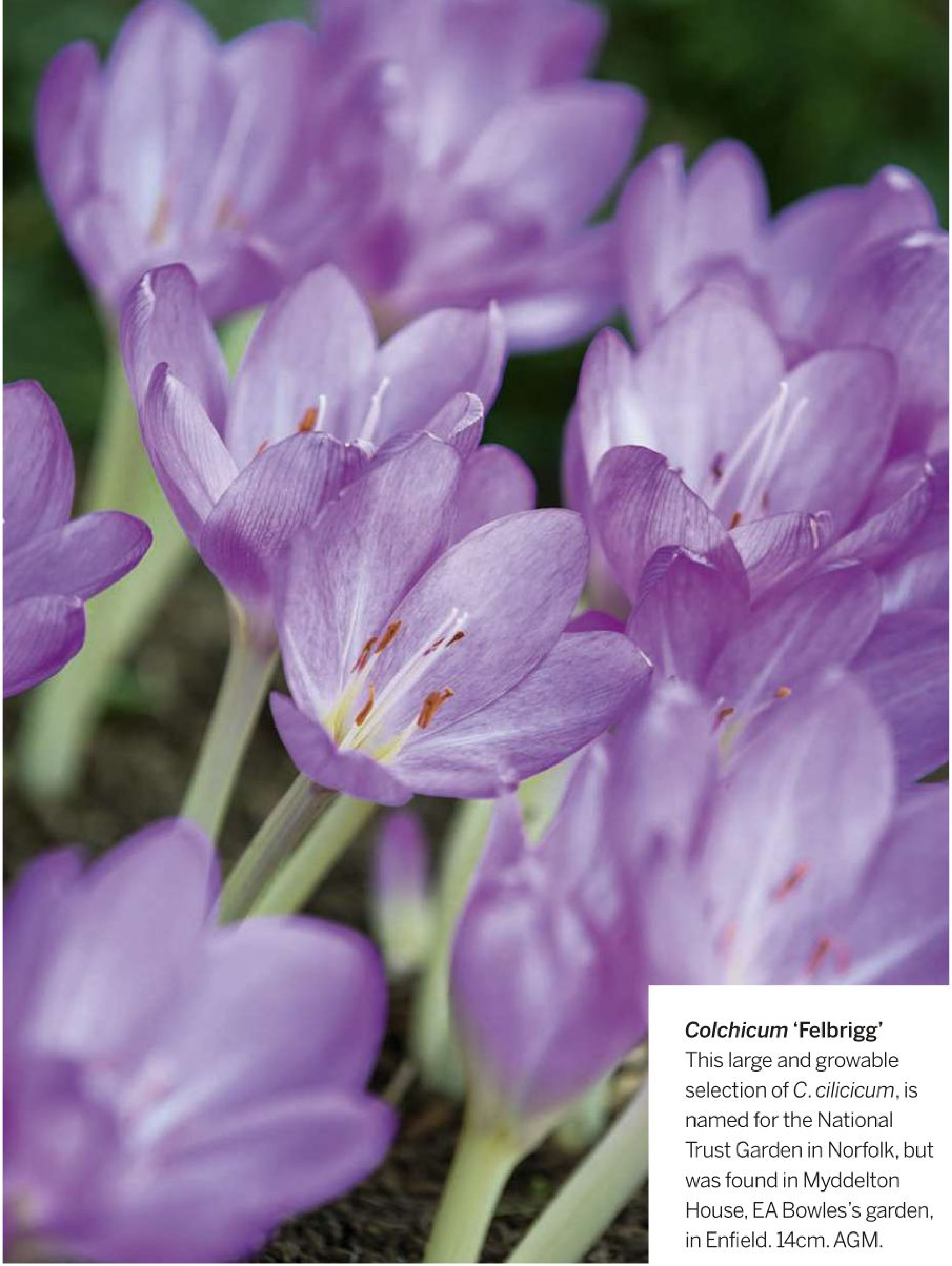
***Colchicum* 'Benton End'**
A substantial flower of quite a dark purple. It was found in the eponymous Suffolk garden of the artist Sir Cedric Morris, who was famed for his bearded irises. 18cm.

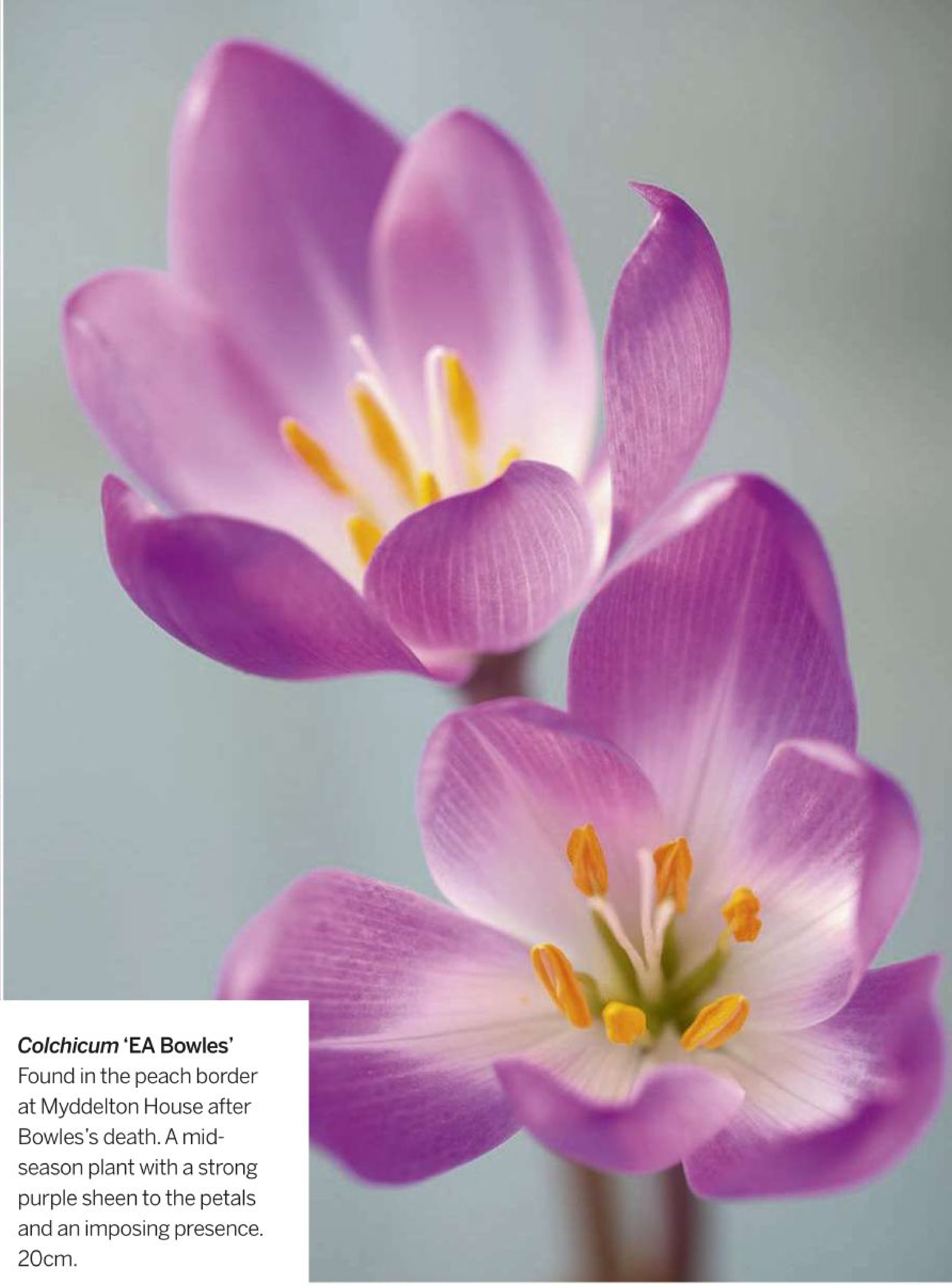


***Colchicum* 'Pink Goblet'**
Found by Dick Trotter in his garden Brin near Inverness. This true-pink plant, which smells of honey, was selected from a sowing of *C. speciosum* 'Album' seed. 20cm. AGM. RHS H5.



***Colchicum byzantinum* 'Pink Star'**
A slim-petalled flower that can produce up to a dozen flowers per corm. The collective impact is delightful. Bulks up quickly. 15cm. AGM. RHS H5.



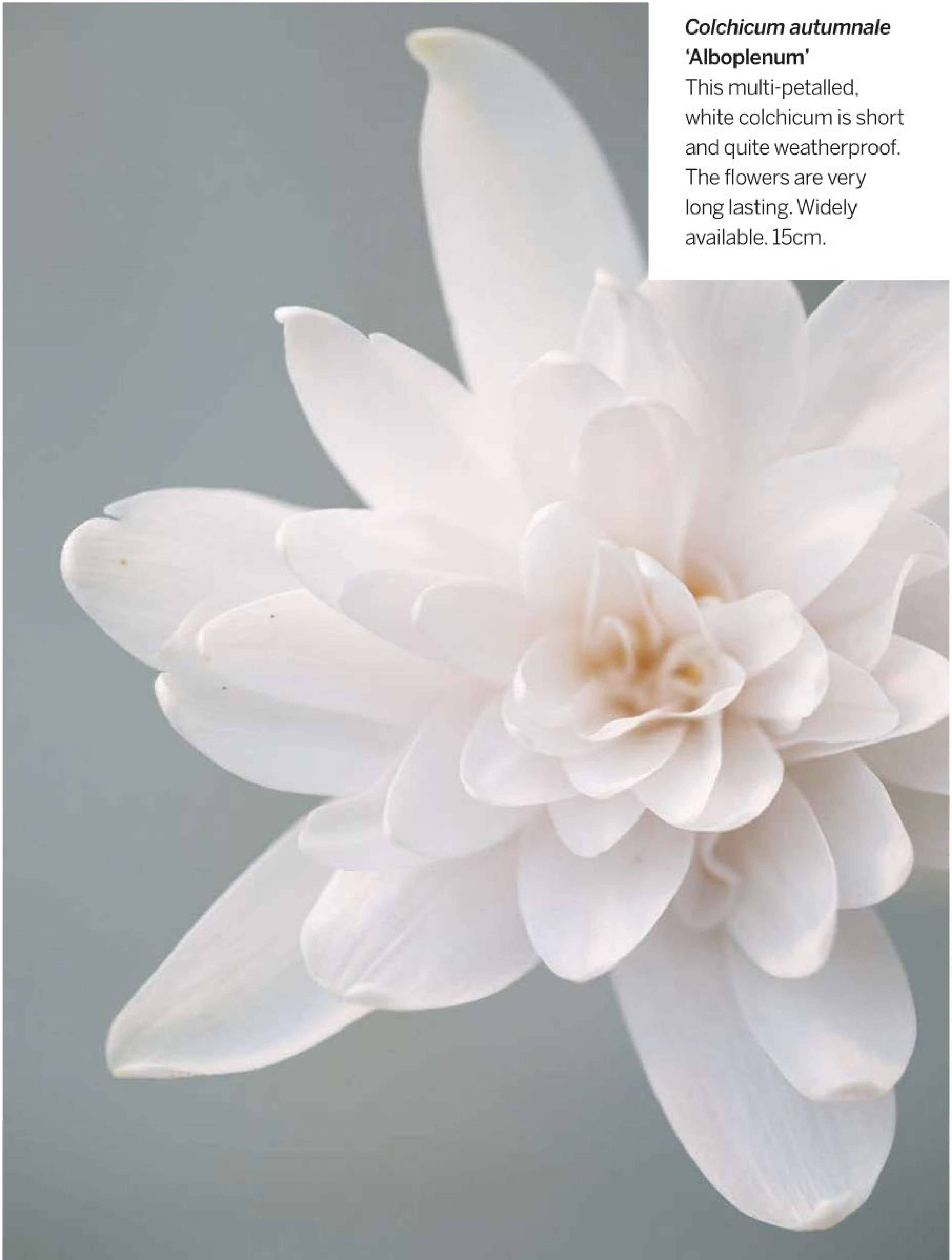


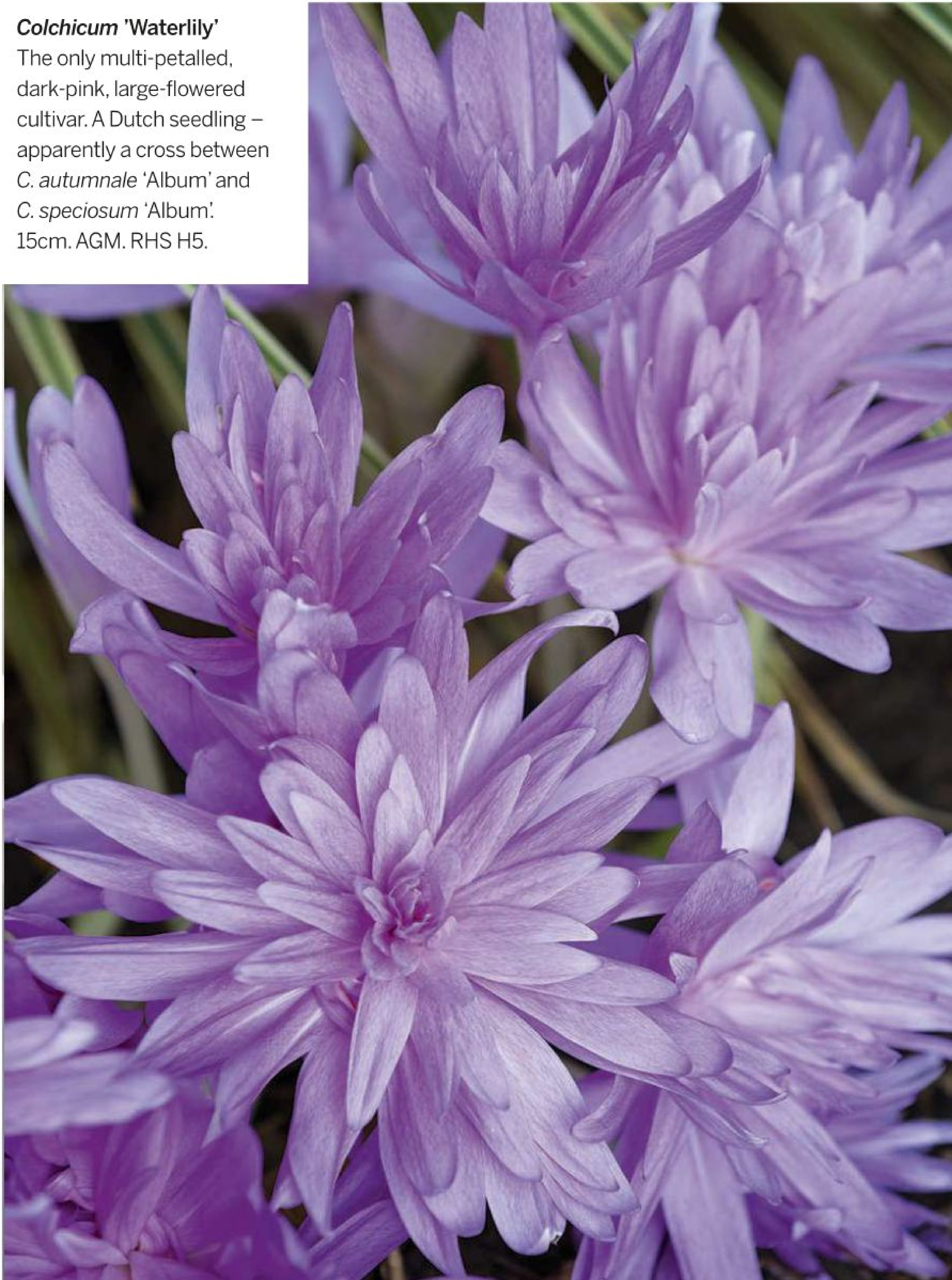
***Colchicum* 'Felbrigg'**
This large and growable selection of *C. cilicicum*, is named for the National Trust Garden in Norfolk, but was found in Myddelton House, EA Bowles's garden, in Enfield. 14cm. AGM.

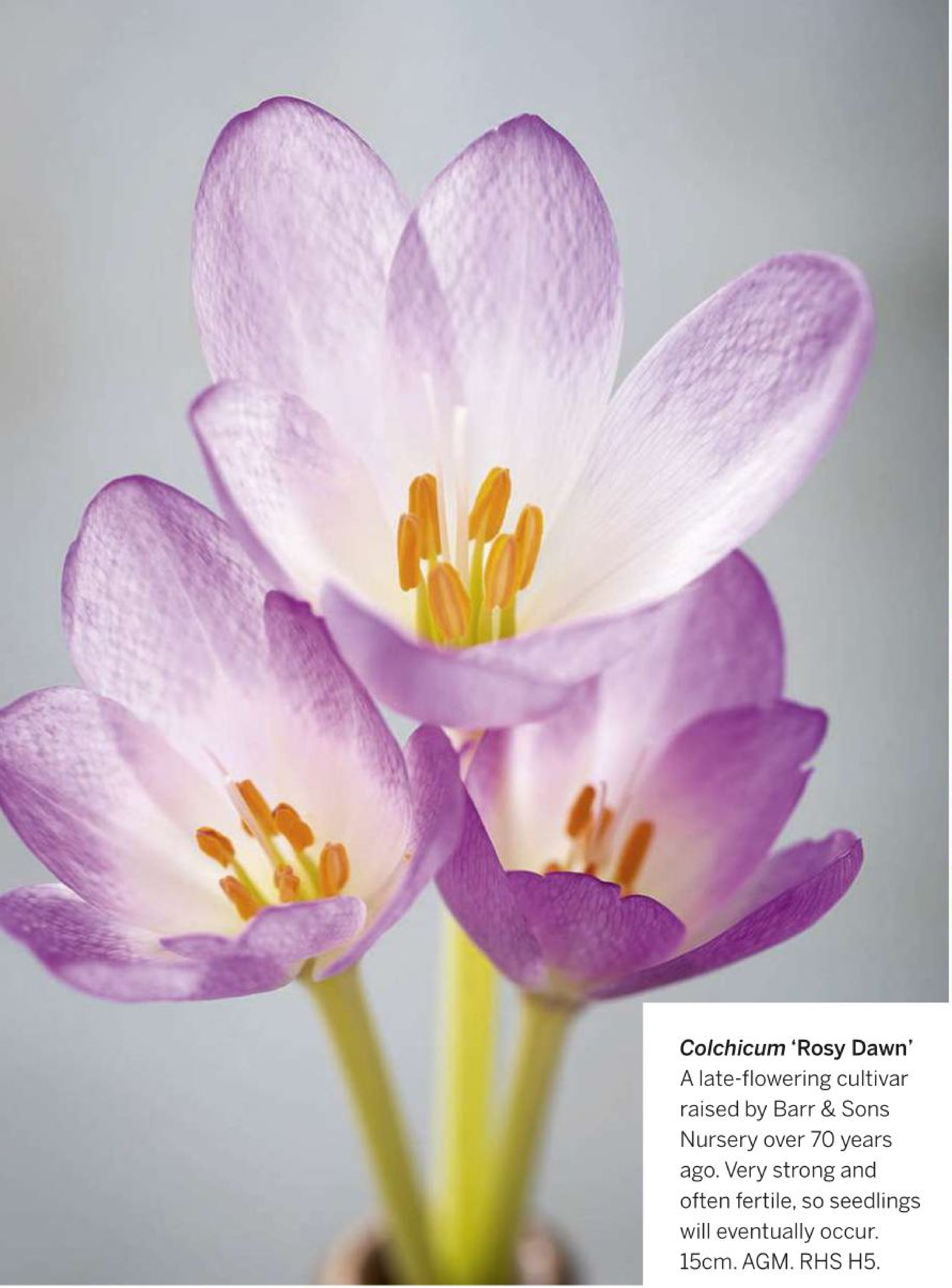
***Colchicum* 'EA Bowles'**
Found in the peach border at Myddelton House after Bowles's death. A mid-season plant with a strong purple sheen to the petals and an imposing presence. 20cm.

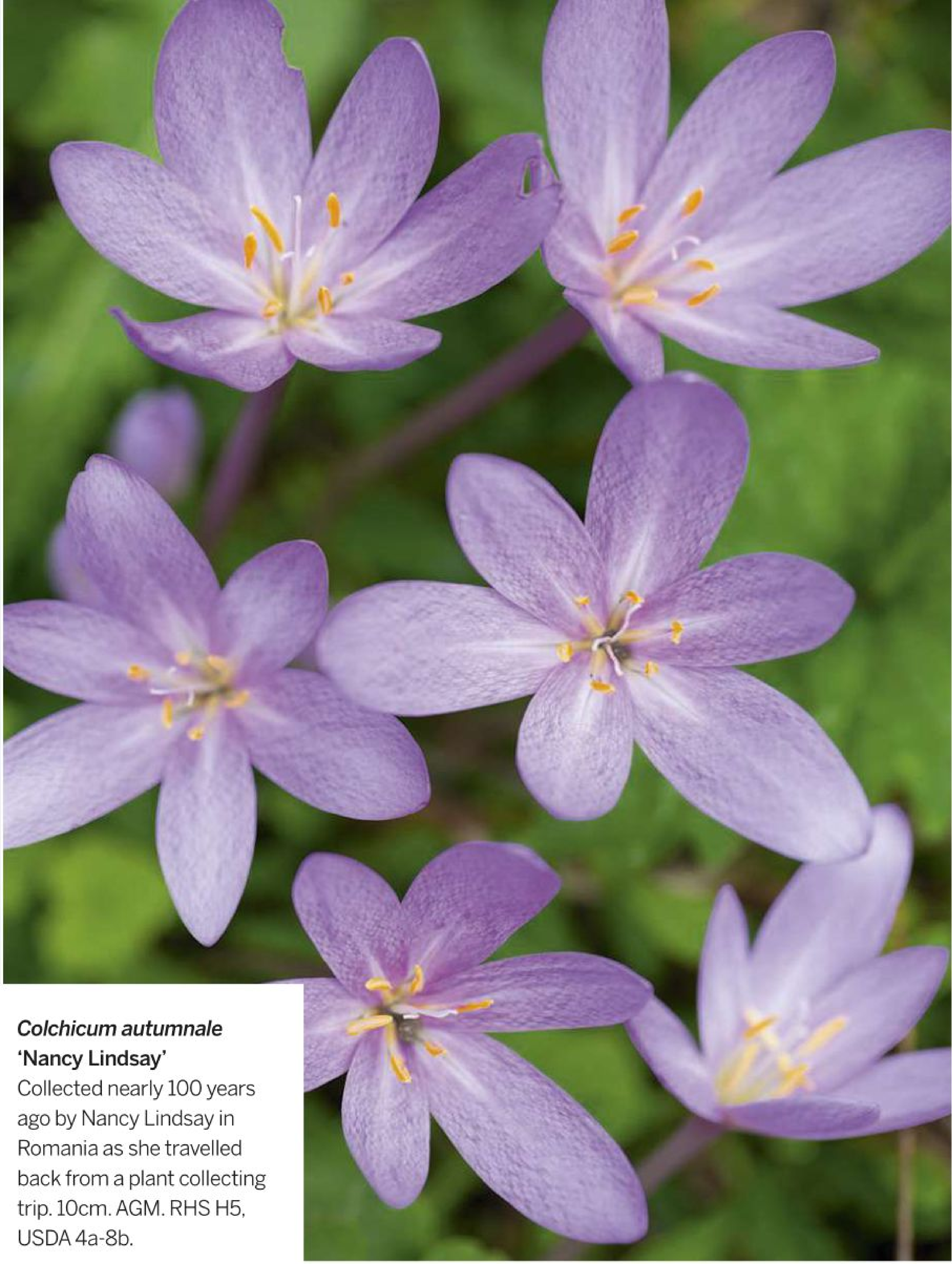
***Colchicum autumnale* 'Alboplenum'**
This multi-petalled, white colchicum is short and quite weatherproof. The flowers are very long lasting. Widely available. 15cm.

***Colchicum* 'Waterlily'**
The only multi-petalled, dark-pink, large-flowered cultivar. A Dutch seedling – apparently a cross between *C. autumnale* 'Album' and *C. speciosum* 'Album'. 15cm. AGM. RHS H5.







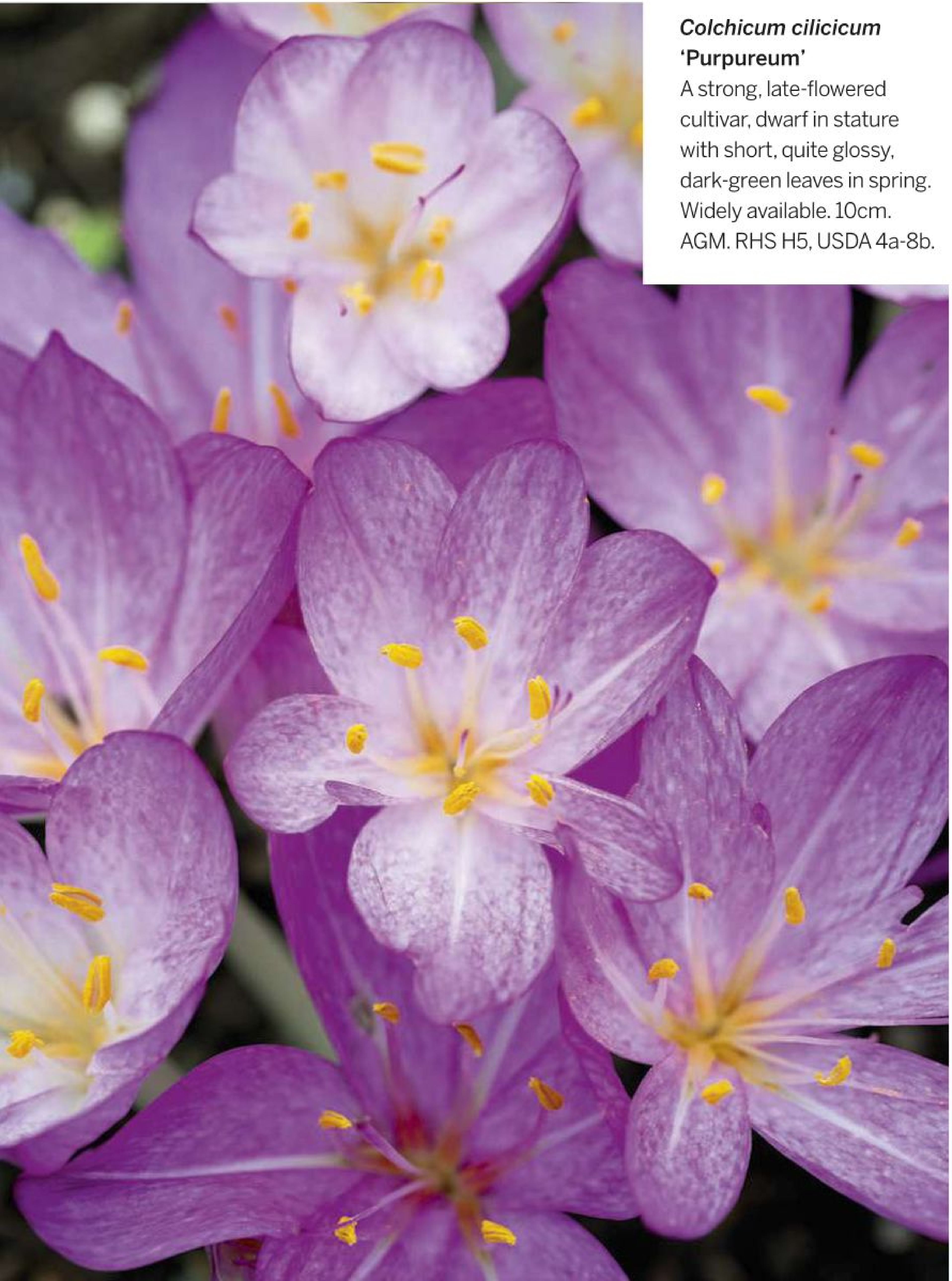


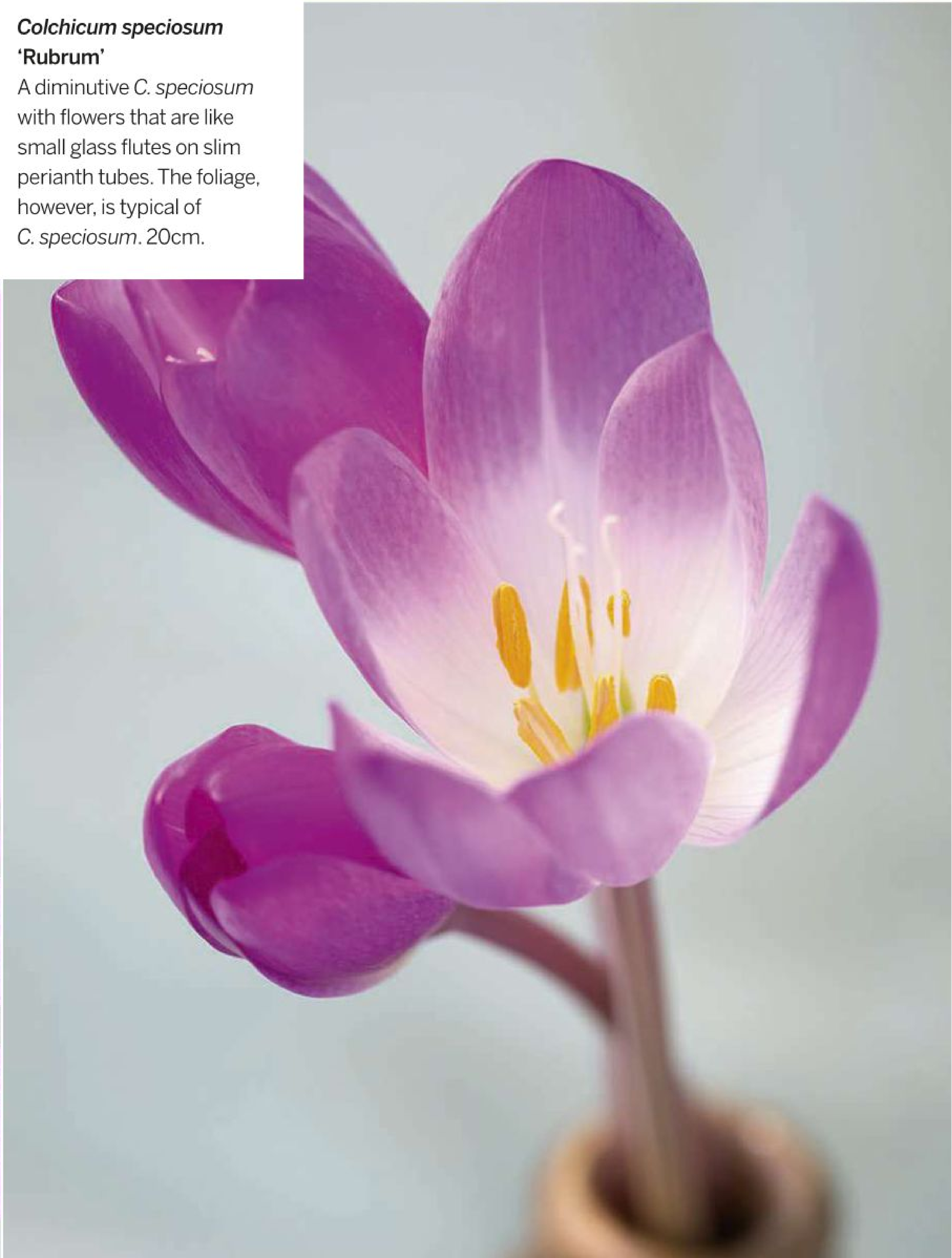
***Colchicum* 'Rosy Dawn'**
A late-flowering cultivar raised by Barr & Sons Nursery over 70 years ago. Very strong and often fertile, so seedlings will eventually occur. 15cm. AGM. RHS H5.

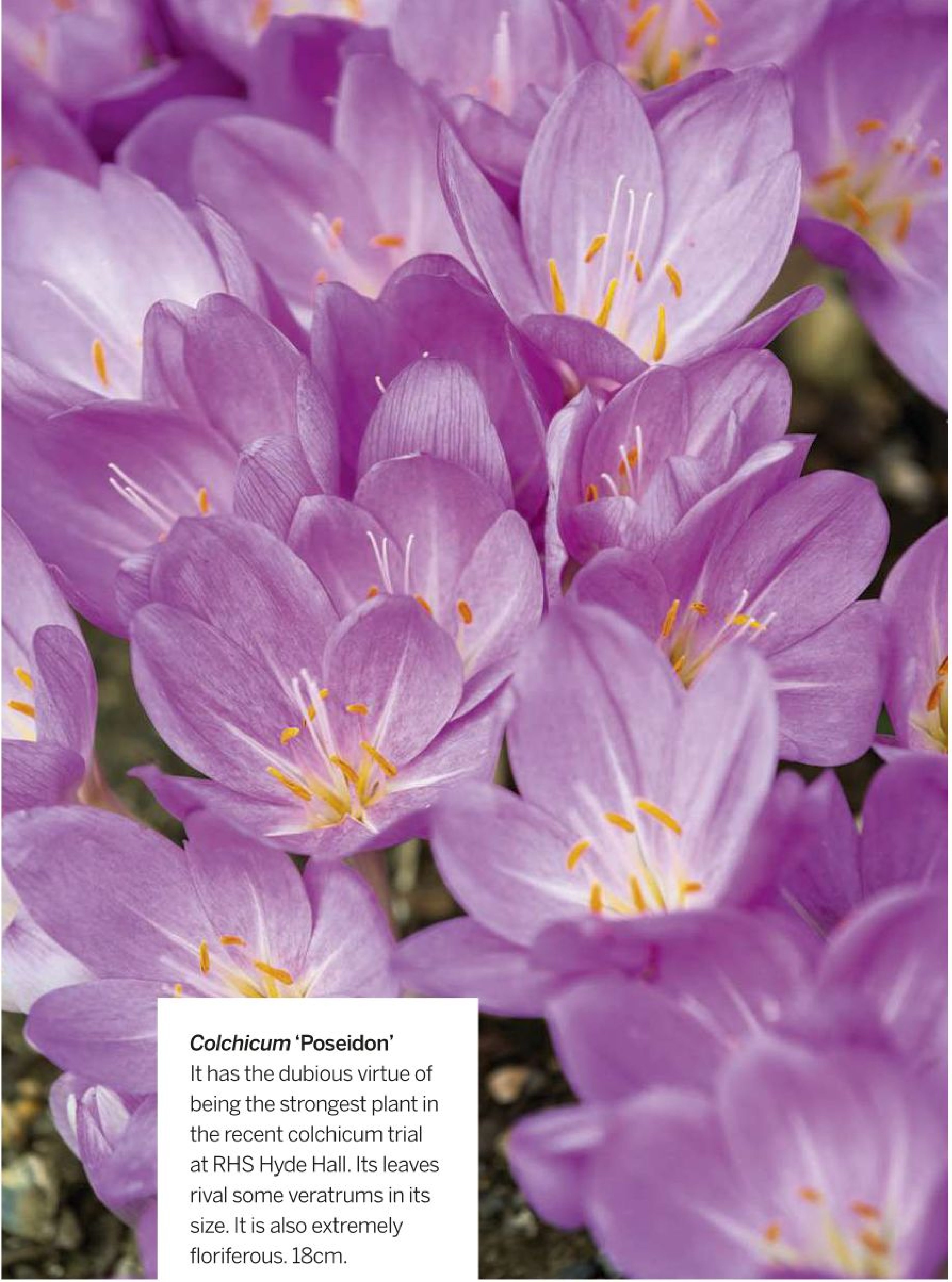
***Colchicum cilicicum* 'Purpureum'**
A strong, late-flowered cultivar, dwarf in stature with short, quite glossy, dark-green leaves in spring. Widely available. 10cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

***Colchicum autumnale* 'Nancy Lindsay'**
Collected nearly 100 years ago by Nancy Lindsay in Romania as she travelled back from a plant collecting trip. 10cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

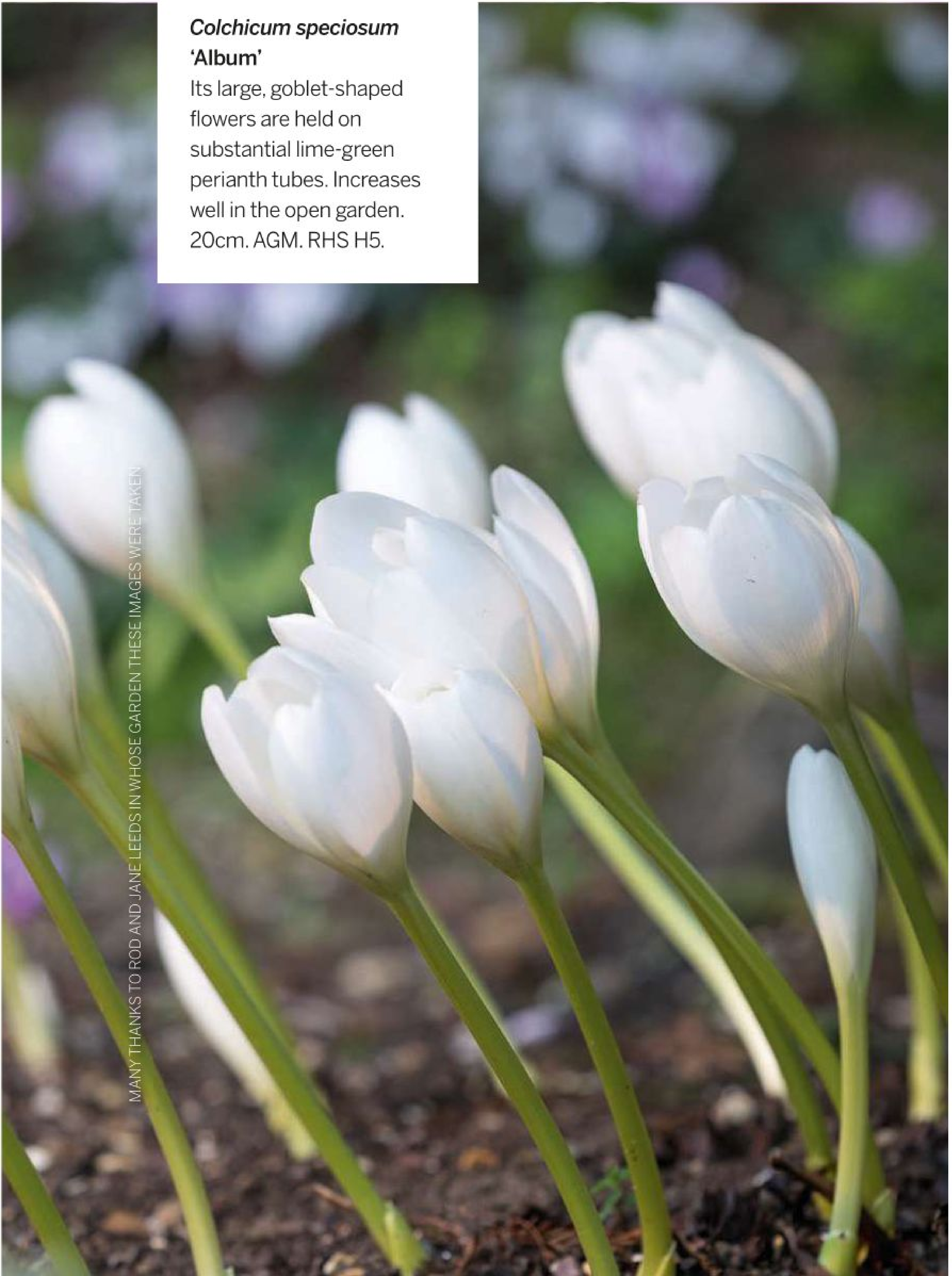
***Colchicum speciosum* 'Rubrum'**
A diminutive *C. speciosum* with flowers that are like small glass flutes on slim perianth tubes. The foliage, however, is typical of *C. speciosum*. 20cm.







Colchicum **'Poseidon'**
It has the dubious virtue of being the strongest plant in the recent colchicum trial at RHS Hyde Hall. Its leaves rival some veratrums in its size. It is also extremely floriferous. 18cm.



***Colchicum speciosum* 'Album'**
Its large, goblet-shaped flowers are held on substantial lime-green perianth tubes. Increases well in the open garden. 20cm. AGM. RHS H5.

MANY THANKS TO ROD AND JANE LEEDS IN WHOSE GARDEN THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN

Cultivation

Colchicums are best planted from June until August when they are dormant. When planting, the top of the dry, brown tunic should be just above soil level. Colchicums thrive in heavy soils and even do well on sandy loams. To keep them growing well it's a good idea to lift and split the group every three to four years.

They generally suffer from few diseases but in damp summer weather they can be damaged by the keeled slug, a small slug that lives between the corm and the tunic. This only becomes a problem if the emerging bud is eaten. The whole plant is toxic to humans and animals. In fact when writing about the dangers of the plants in his *Herbal* of 1597, the English botanist John Gerard described meadow saffrons, some of which are still classed as colchicums, as *Colchicum strangulatorium*.

Viable seed is occasionally set in a number of cultivars. It is useful in selecting new forms, but uncollected seed can germinate near the parent plant leading to a hybrid group. The answer is to lift the whole group when in flower and ruthlessly keep only the true flowers.

The smaller-flowered colchicums, such as *C. agrippinum* and C. *autumnale* 'Nancy Lindsay', are very good companions for the species and cultivars of the winter-green *Polypodium* ferns as these have fresh fronds in late summer, which fade away in late spring. The dark-flowered colchicum cultivars, such as *C.* 'Benton End', *C.* 'EA Bowles' and *C. speciosum* 'Rubrum' can be associated with any cultivar of *Pulmonaria*, even better if the *Pulmonaria* has been clipped back in July, so both plants look pristine in autumn. If left in situ for many years the colchicum tunics form layers rather like a Russian doll and inhibit the size of the new corm. The white flowers of *C. speciosum* 'Album' can look amazing planted among *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Kokuryu'. The nearly black leaves of this tough little mondo grass frame the white goblets to perfection.

In grass, the large-flowered colchicums are in their element. In traditional orchards or wildflower meadows they flower well and are supported by the surrounding grass. This does mean that you will need to leave the grass uncut from the end of August until late June. Although, in some years the grass could be cut in November to December and do no damage.

A peculiar characteristic of colchicums is when cut for indoor display they do not need water, and will last well in their dry state in a vase and adding water does not extend their life; you can even grow the corm indoors on a windowsill, without any compost or pot and it will still flower.

Where to see and buy

- **Avon Bulbs**
  Burnt House Farm, Mid Lambrook, South Petherton, Somerset TA13 5HE.
  Tel 01460 242177,
  avonbulbs.co.uk
- **East Ruston Old Vicarage***
  East Ruston, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 9HN.
  Tel 01692 650432, e-ruston-oldvicaragegardens.co.uk
  Open Wednesday – Sunday, 12-5.30pm, until 26 October.
- **Rare Plants**
  PO Box 468, Wrexham, Clwyd LL13 9XR.
  Tel 01978 366399,
  rareplants.co.uk
- **RHS Hyde Hall Garden**
  Creephedge Lane, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8ET.
  Tel 01245 402019,
  rhs.org.uk
  Open 10am-6pm.
- **RV Roger Ltd**
  The Nurseries, Malton Road, Pickering, North Yorkshire YO18 7JW.
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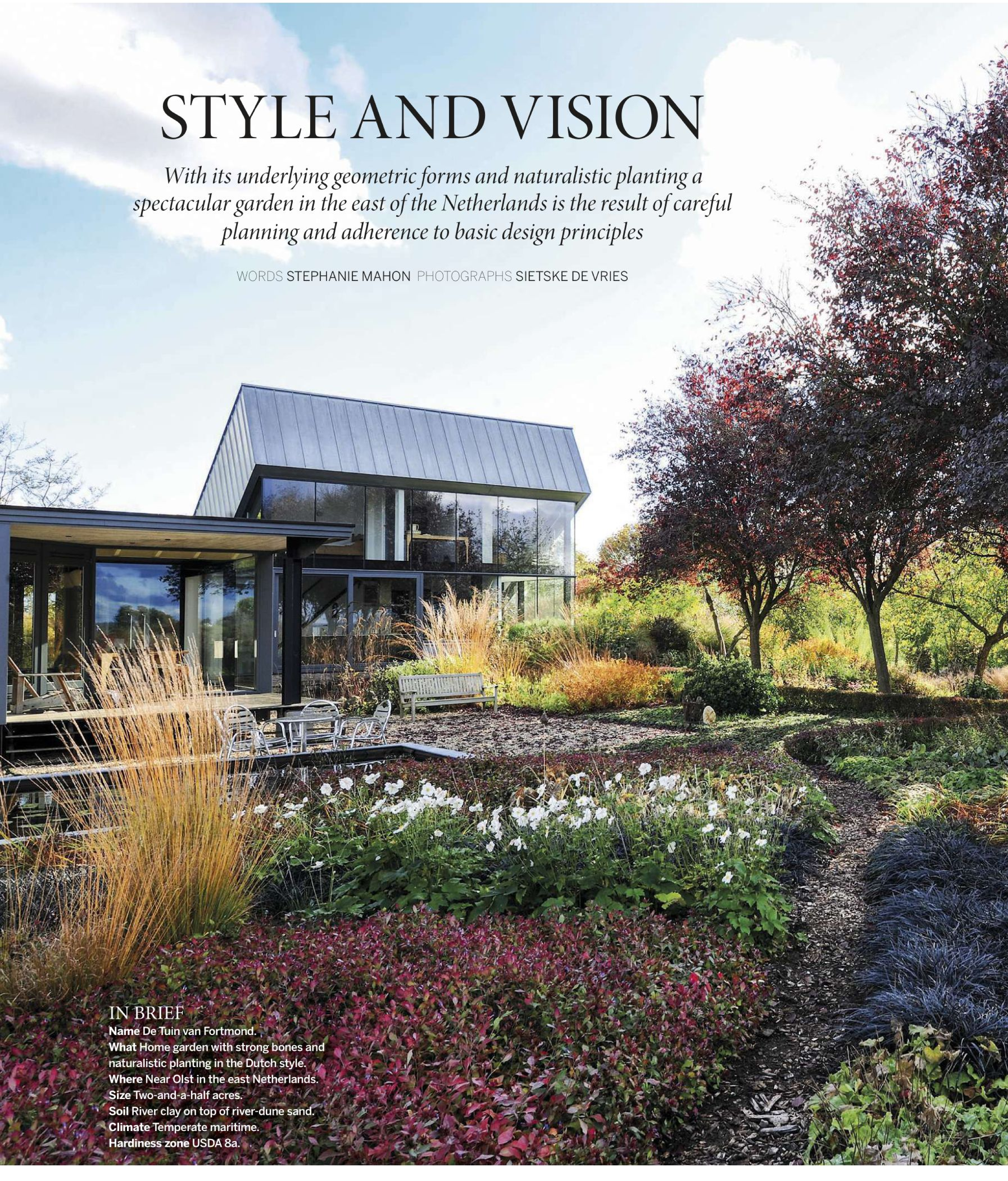
STYLE AND VISION

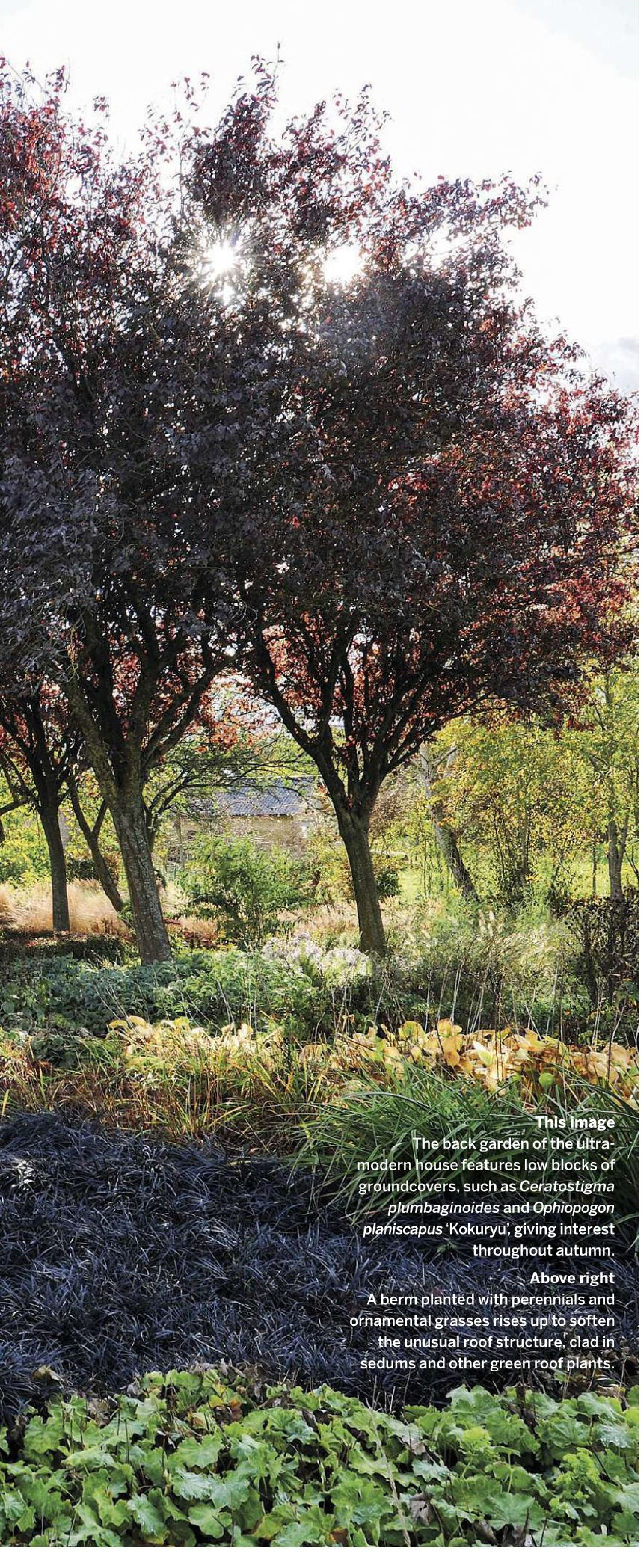
With its underlying geometric forms and naturalistic planting a spectacular garden in the east of the Netherlands is the result of careful planning and adherence to basic design principles

WORDS STEPHANIE MAHON PHOTOGRAPHS SIETSKE DE VRIES



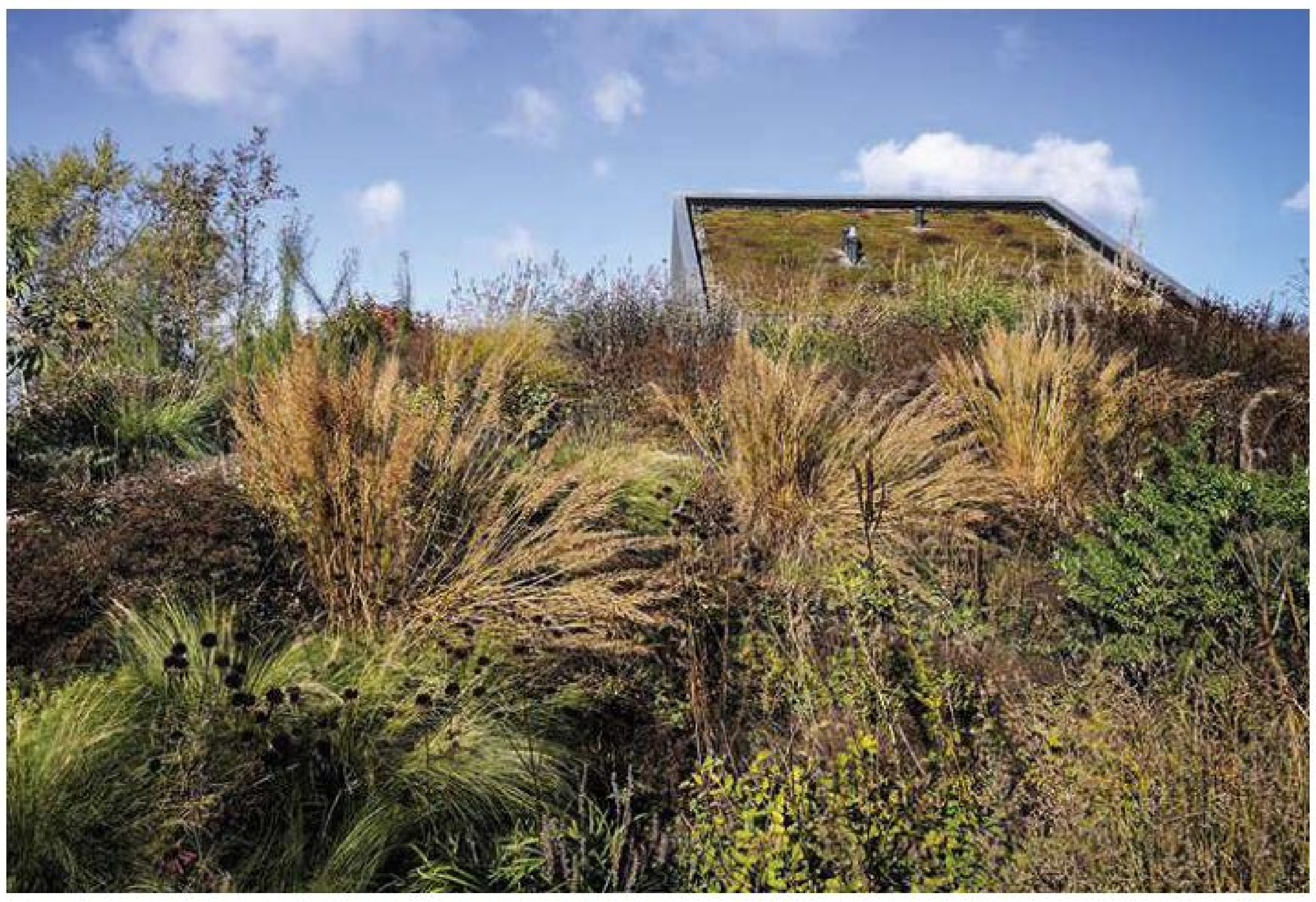
IN BRIEF

Name De Tuin van Fortmond.
What Home garden with strong bones and naturalistic planting in the Dutch style.
Where Near Olst in the east Netherlands.
Size Two-and-a-half acres.
Soil River clay on top of river-dune sand.
Climate Temperate maritime.
Hardiness zone USDA 8a.



This image
The back garden of the ultra-modern house features low blocks of groundcovers, such as *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* and *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Kokuryu', giving interest throughout autumn.

Above right
A berm planted with perennials and ornamental grasses rises up to soften the unusual roof structure, clad in sedums and other green roof plants.



Just over an hour's drive from Amsterdam, on the scenic floodplain of the River IJssel, there rises an extraordinary house of impossible angle, like a book part opened. Owners Willem and Josée de Haan have an eye for and love of contemporary design, and this has been extended from their ultra-modern, minimalistic home into their accomplished garden. They moved here in 1996, seeking refuge from town life, and settled on the small enclave of Fortmond, where for sale they found a former farmhouse, a cow shed and two-and-a-half-acres of land.

"We demolished the cow shed and got an architect to design a modern living area," explains Willem. This section offers wonderful views of the garden and landscape through the floor-to-ceiling windows. "But the bedrooms and bathroom were still in the old farmhouse," he says, "so in 2012 we commissioned another architect to design something to replace it. At first, we were refused planning permission, as the design was seen as too strange." To ease the planners' concerns, they suggested a berm or bank that could wrap around the front of the property, sloping in the same direction and at the same angle as the roof, which would be clothed in plants. With this softening and greening of the design, permission was granted.

By this time, Willem and Josée had begun work on the garden. "Our last garden had been designed by a landscape architect, but here we wanted to do it ourselves," Willem explains. He describes the style as "geometric forms with nonchalant planting in between" inspired by the naturalistic style of Piet Oudolf.

Rugged clay pavers, reclaimed from a former brick factory, lead down into the back garden, where beds of late-summer perennials including *Phlomis russeliana*, *Agastache* 'Blackadder', *Persicaria* and *Actaea* give a sense of enclosure without blocking the wider view.

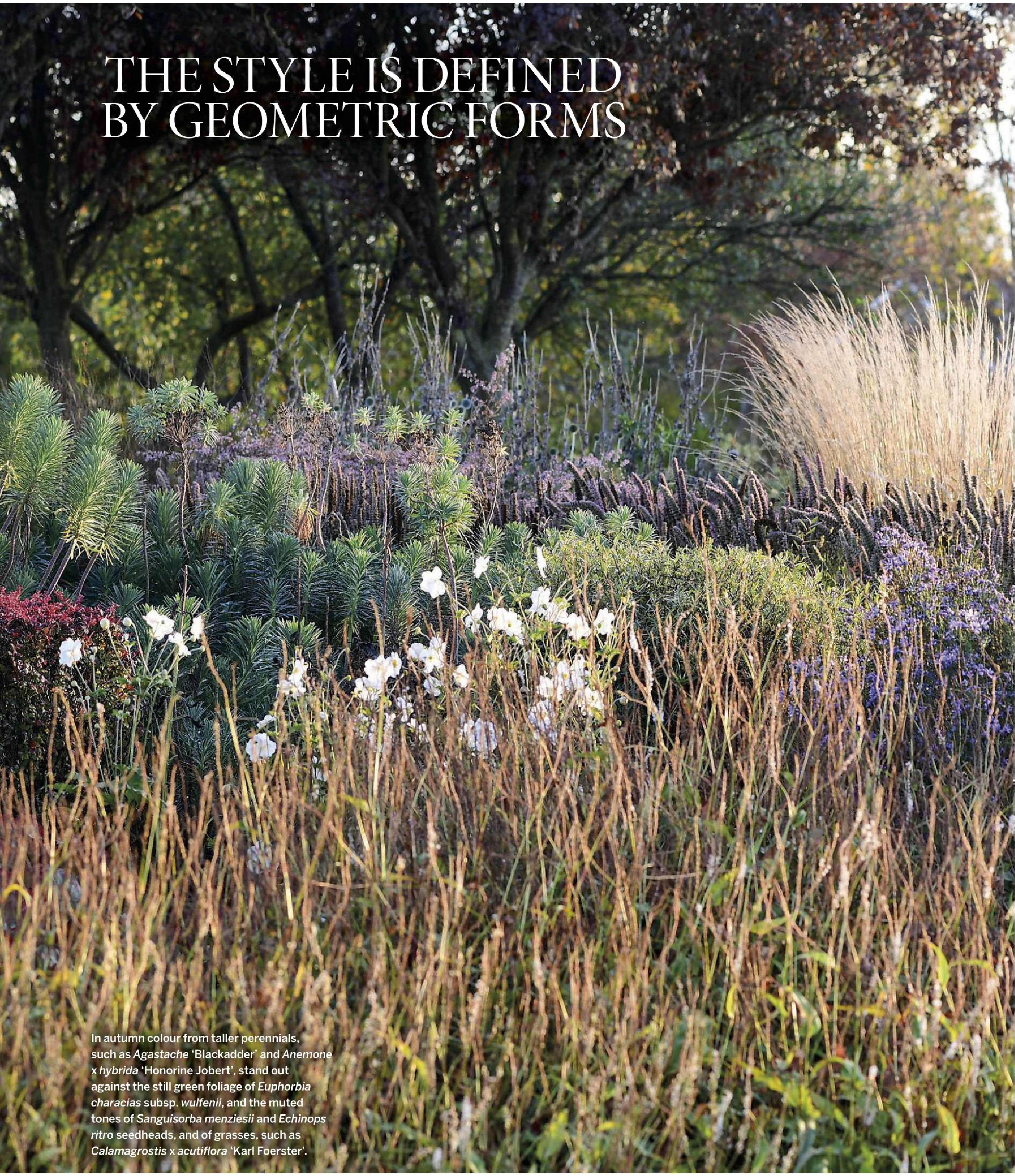
The garden is demarcated with a grid of large, gravel squares, and dominated by two rows of purple-leaved *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra' trees. Further structure is provided with low hedges of clipped berberis laid along the limits of the old cow shed, and taller hedges of copper beech that divide up different areas, the repeated dark foliage giving a soothing consistency to the underlying framework.

At the centre are two matching, rectangular lily ponds. The planting areas that separate and surround them comprise many plants for autumn interest, such as Japanese anemones and ornamental grasses, as well as chunky blocks of groundcover, such as vincas, hostas and geraniums. Their lower profile ensures a clear eye-line from the house out across the surrounding fields, into which the outer garden merges seamlessly. Willem created this effect by using curated-looking planting near the house, and more naturalistic schemes further out, which then flow into a band of wildflowers – the same ones that grow in the De Duursche Waarden nature reserve beyond.

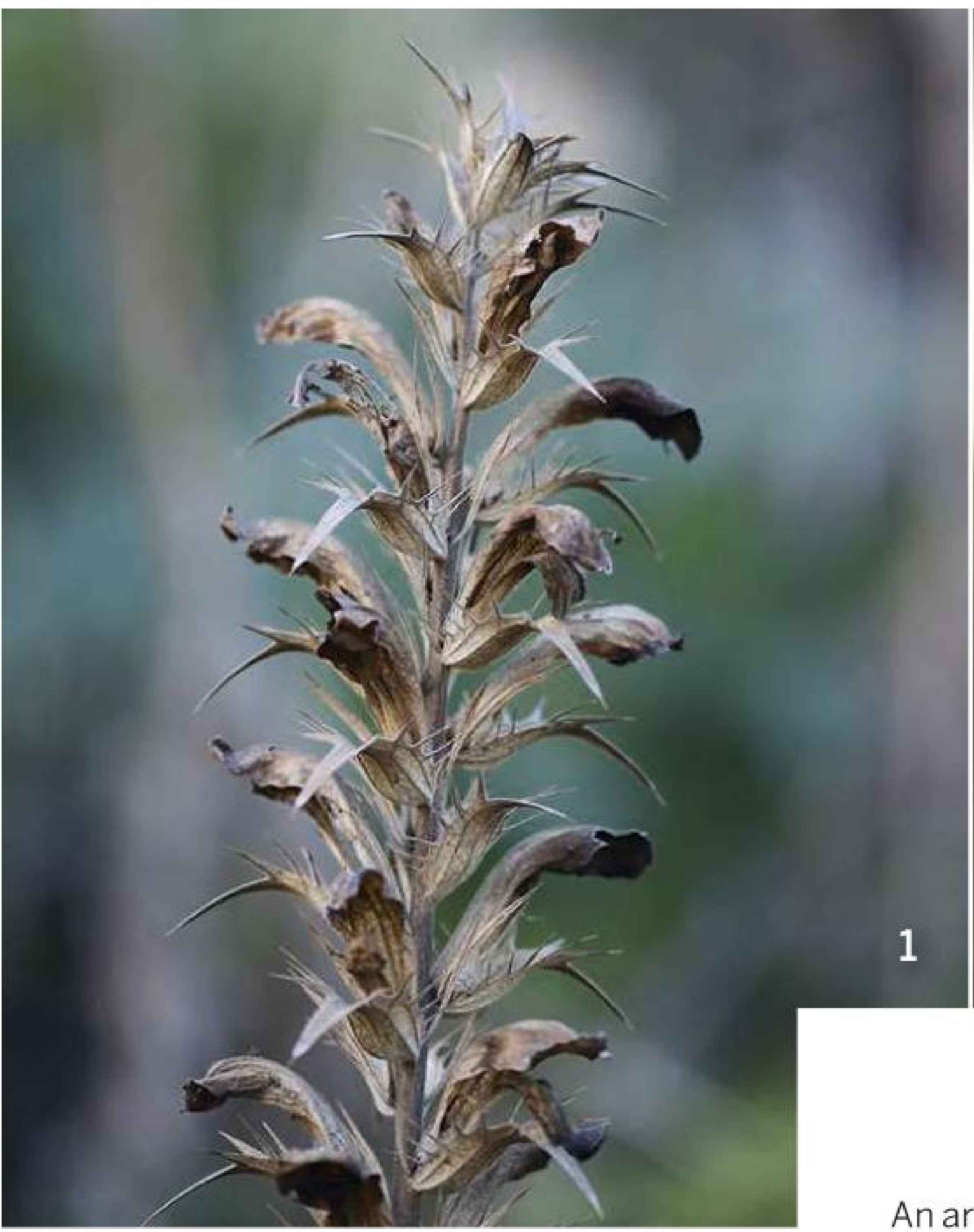
In the front garden, the berm is populated with trees including a southern beech and a fig, blocks of *Ophiopogon* and *Ceratostigma*,

To continue turn to page 57 ▷

THE STYLE IS DEFINED BY GEOMETRIC FORMS



In autumn colour from taller perennials, such as *Agastache* 'Blackadder' and *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert', stand out against the still green foliage of *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*, and the muted tones of *Sanguisorba menziesii* and *Echinops ritro* seedheads, and of grasses, such as *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'.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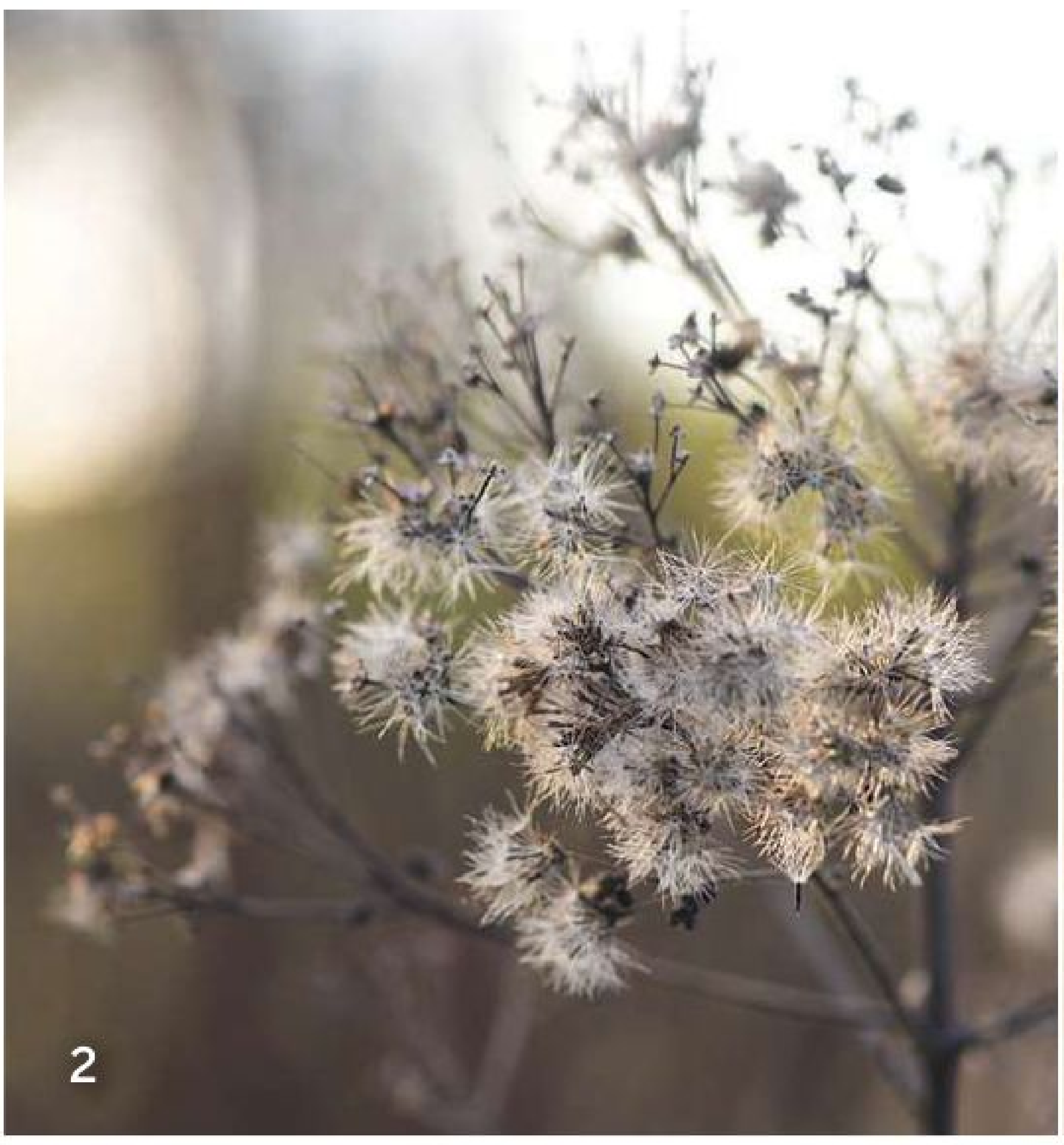
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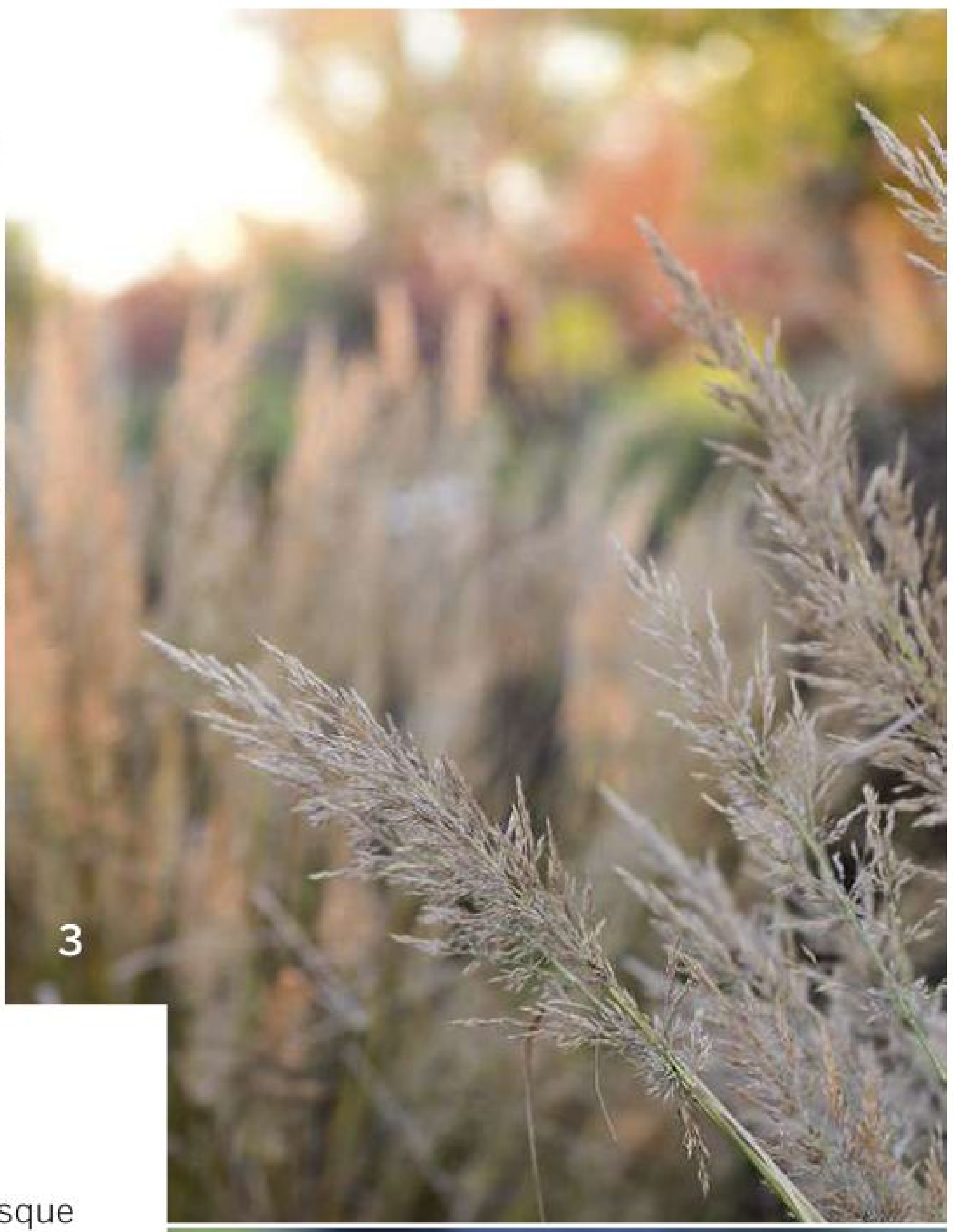
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8 KEY SEEDHEADS

1 *Acanthus spinosus*
An architectural plant with glossy, dark-green leaves and statuesque stems, carrying multiple whorls of white flowers with purple bracts that make striking winter silhouettes. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b[†].

2 *Eupatorium maculatum*
Loved by pollinators, the rose-purple, domed flowers of this late-summer stalwart die well and provide food for the birds in winter. 2m. RHS H7.

3 *Calamagrostis brachytricha*
Low clumps of foliage sprout thin stems in early autumn, with fluffy, pinkish-grey plumes turning silver-buff in winter. 1.2m. AGM[*]. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

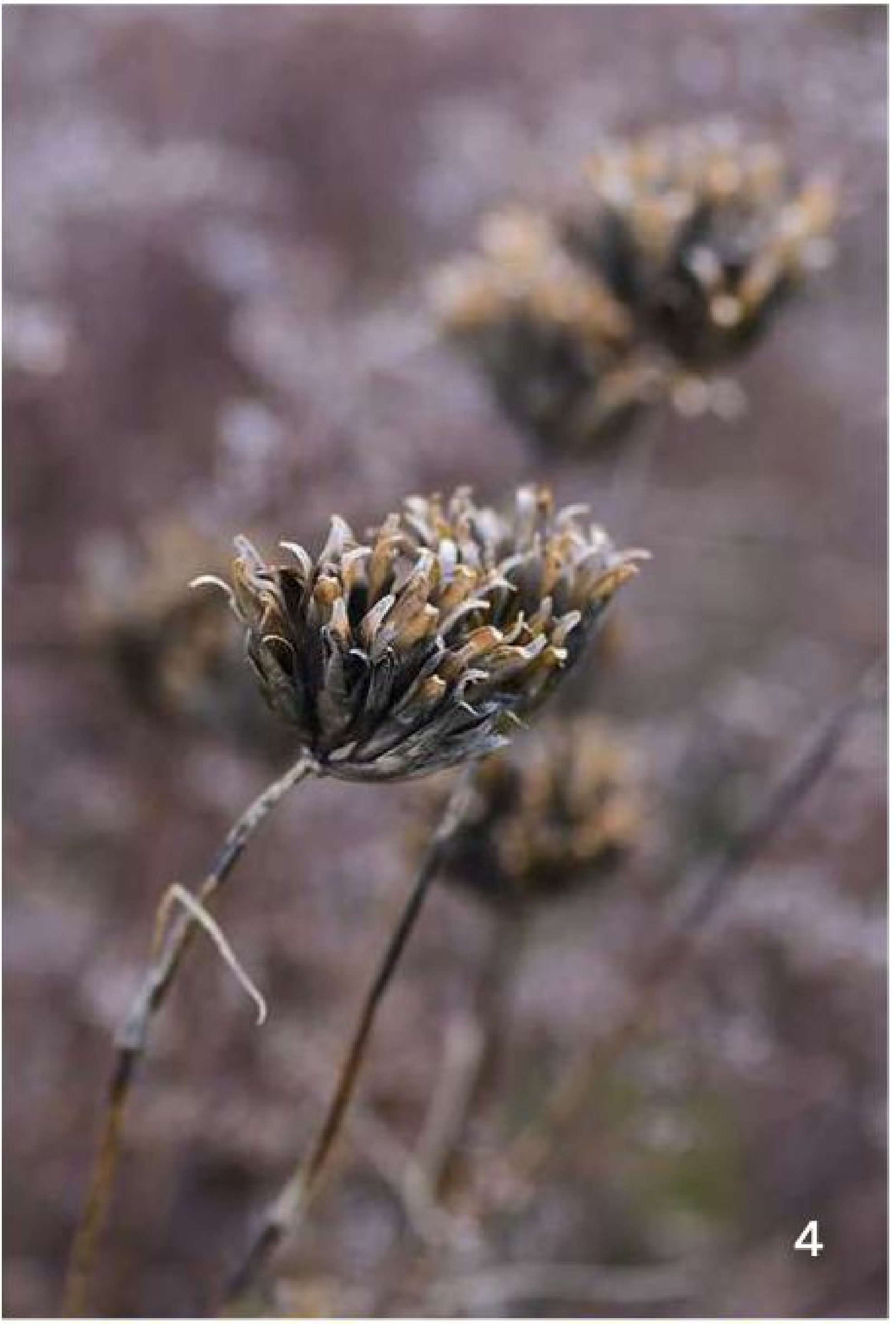
4 *Dianthus carthusianorum*
A semi-evergreen perennial, this top performer has grass-like leaves and wiry stems topped with bright, magenta flowers from early summer through autumn fading to attractive seedheads. 60cm. RHS H7.

5 *Allium atropurpureum*
Some of the best seedheads for form are alliums. Leave them in borders over winter to enjoy their globe, dome and nest shapes. 50cm. RHS H5.

6 *Glycyrrhiza yunnanensis*
This interesting perennial, with vetch-like leaves and violet flowers, is related to liquorice. It gives its best show in winter with inflated, spiny seedheads like bristly, brown cones. 2m. RHS H5.

7 *Baptisia australis*
This plant has attractive, blue-green leaves and beautiful, indigo-blue flowers – a bit like looser lupins – in early summer, followed by black seed capsules. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

8 *Cynara cardunculus*
The cardoon is known for its huge, arching, silver-green leaves, but its thistle-like flowers flush luminous mauve-purple in late summer before drying to stand proud in winter. 2.5m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.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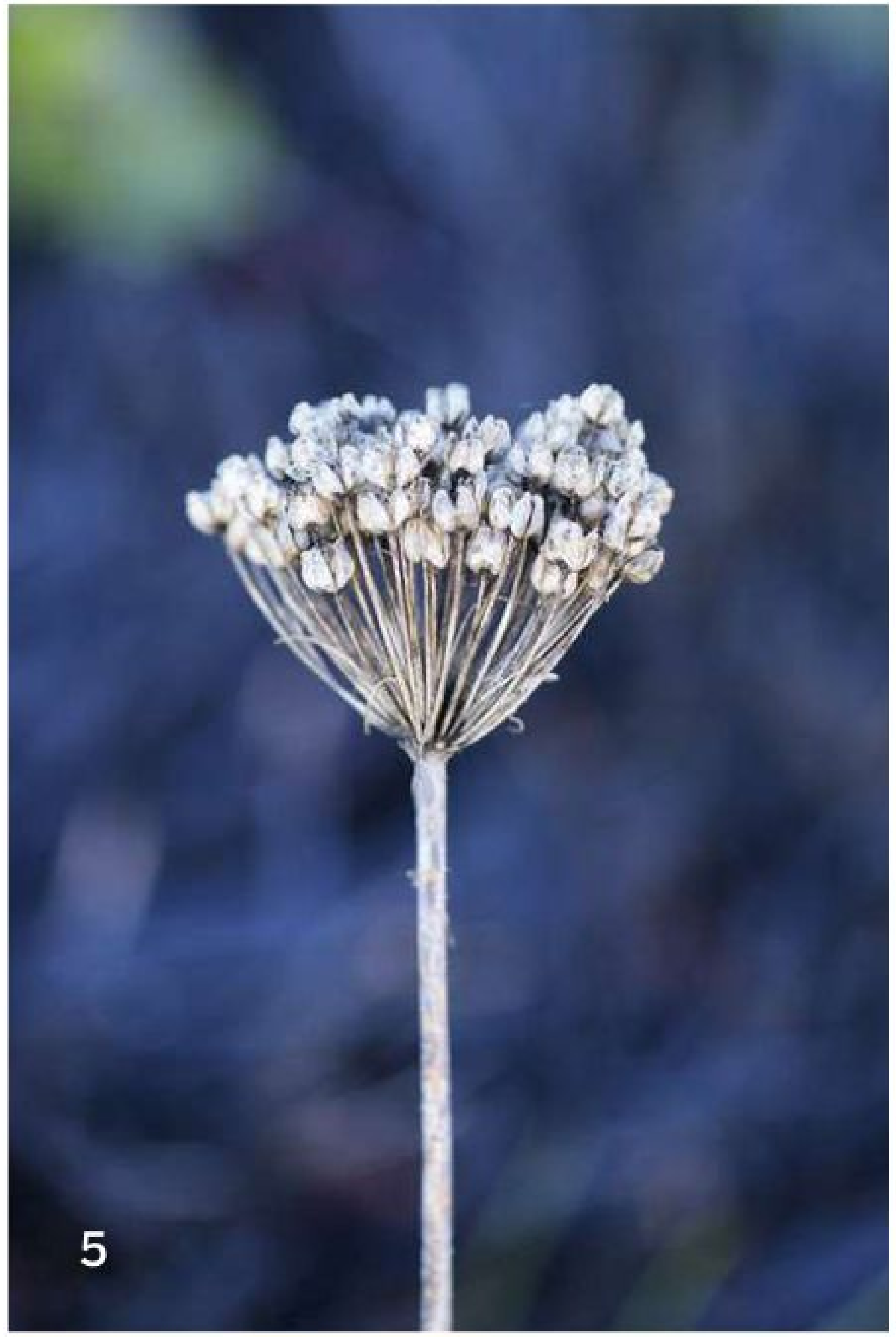
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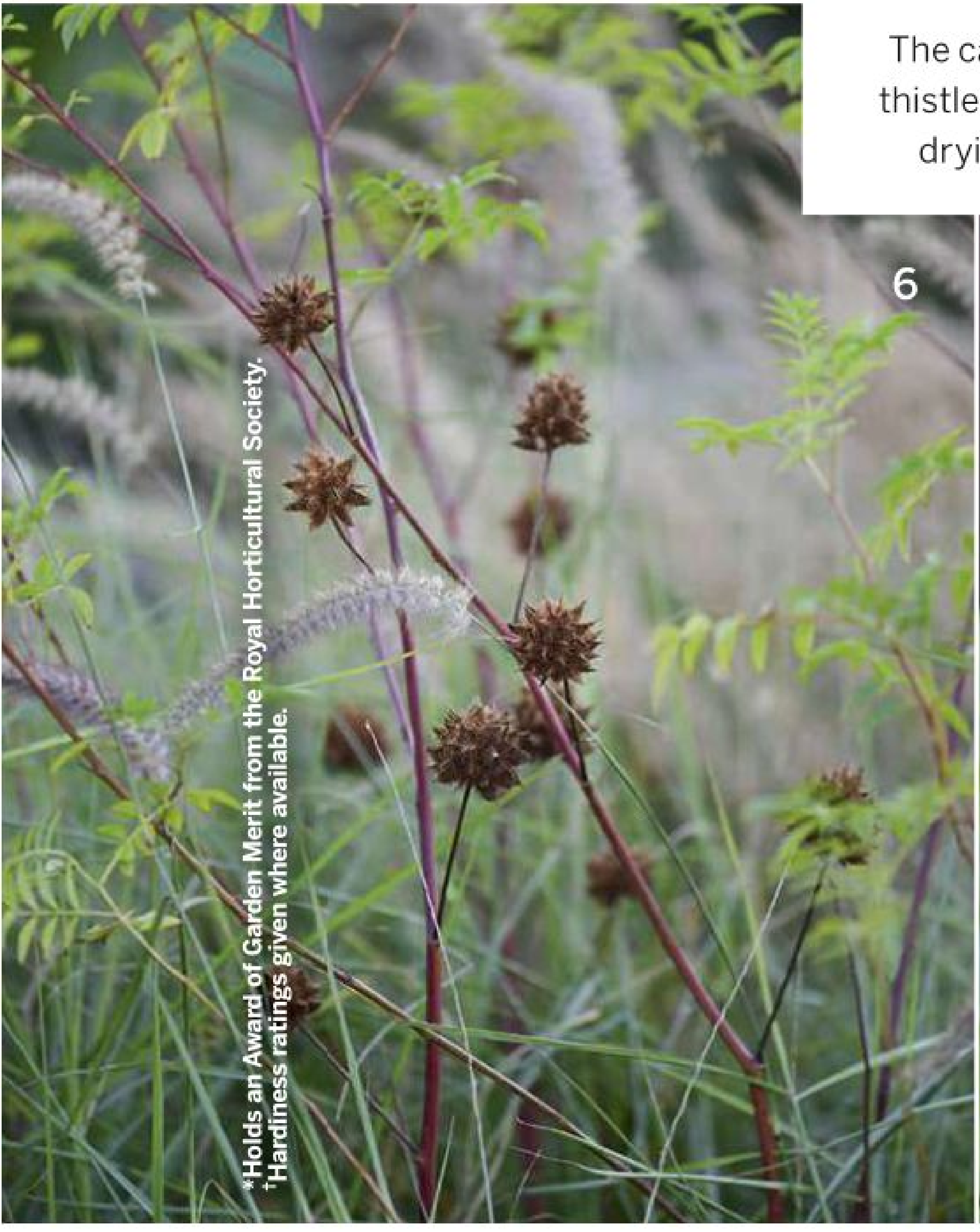
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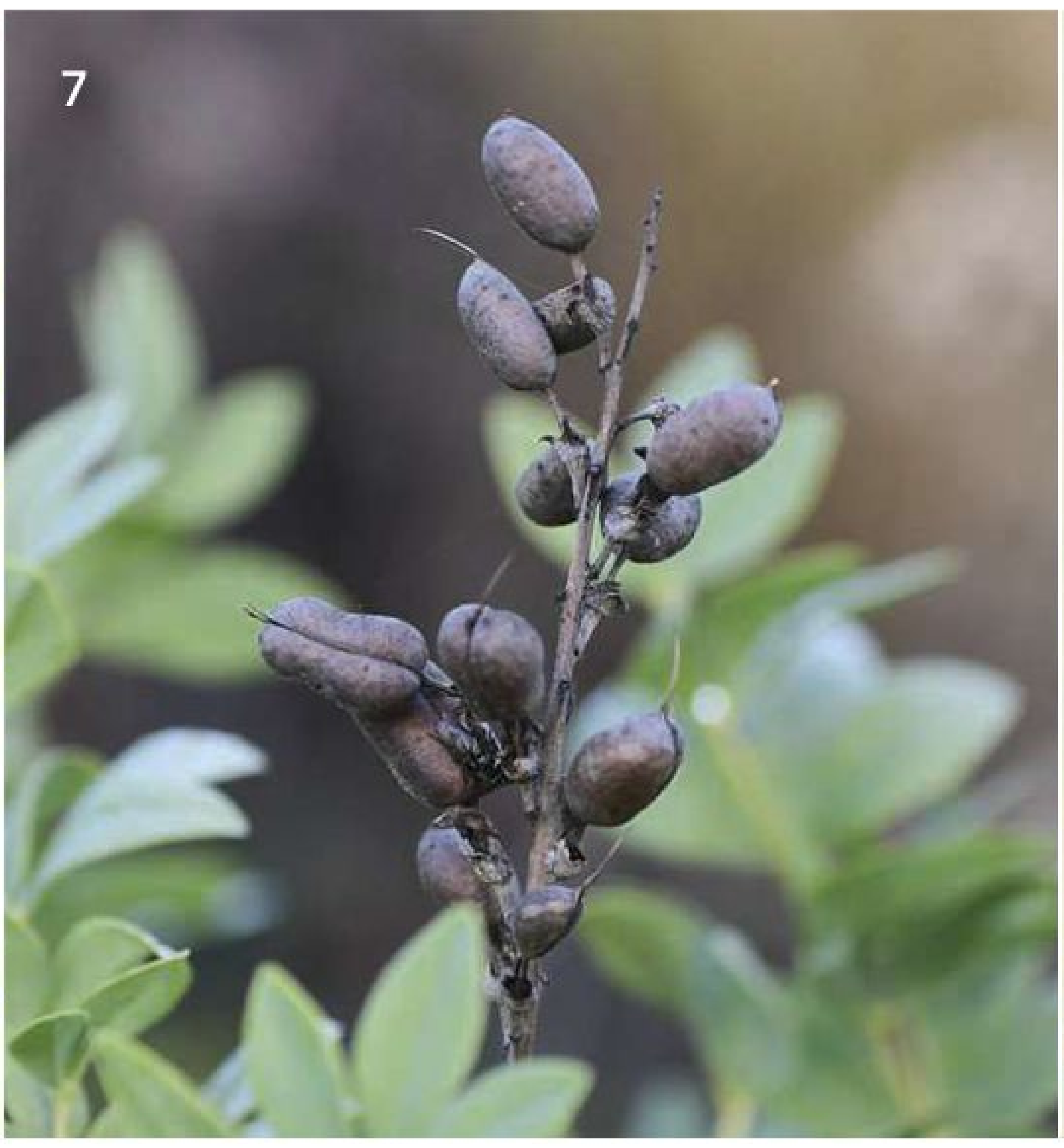
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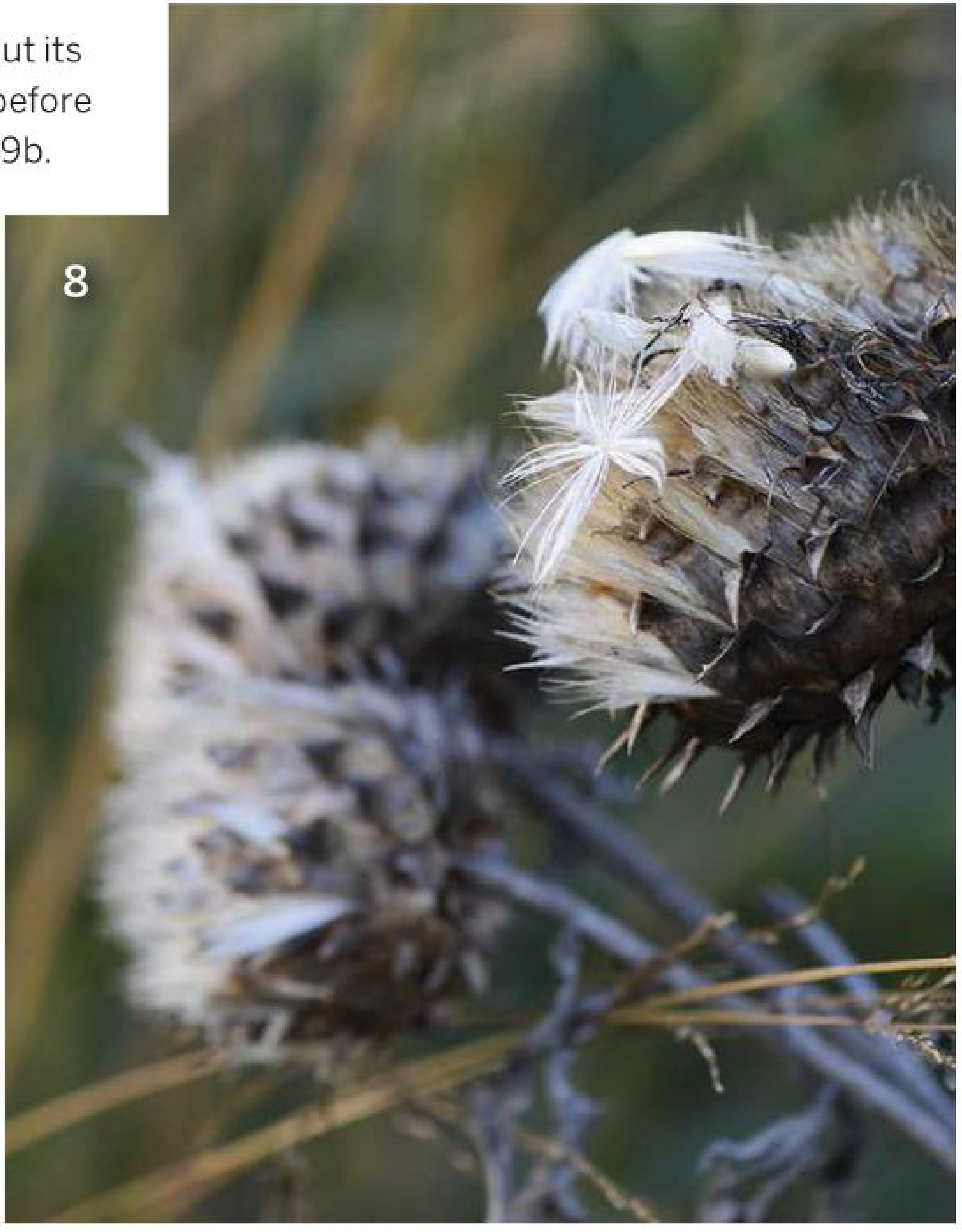
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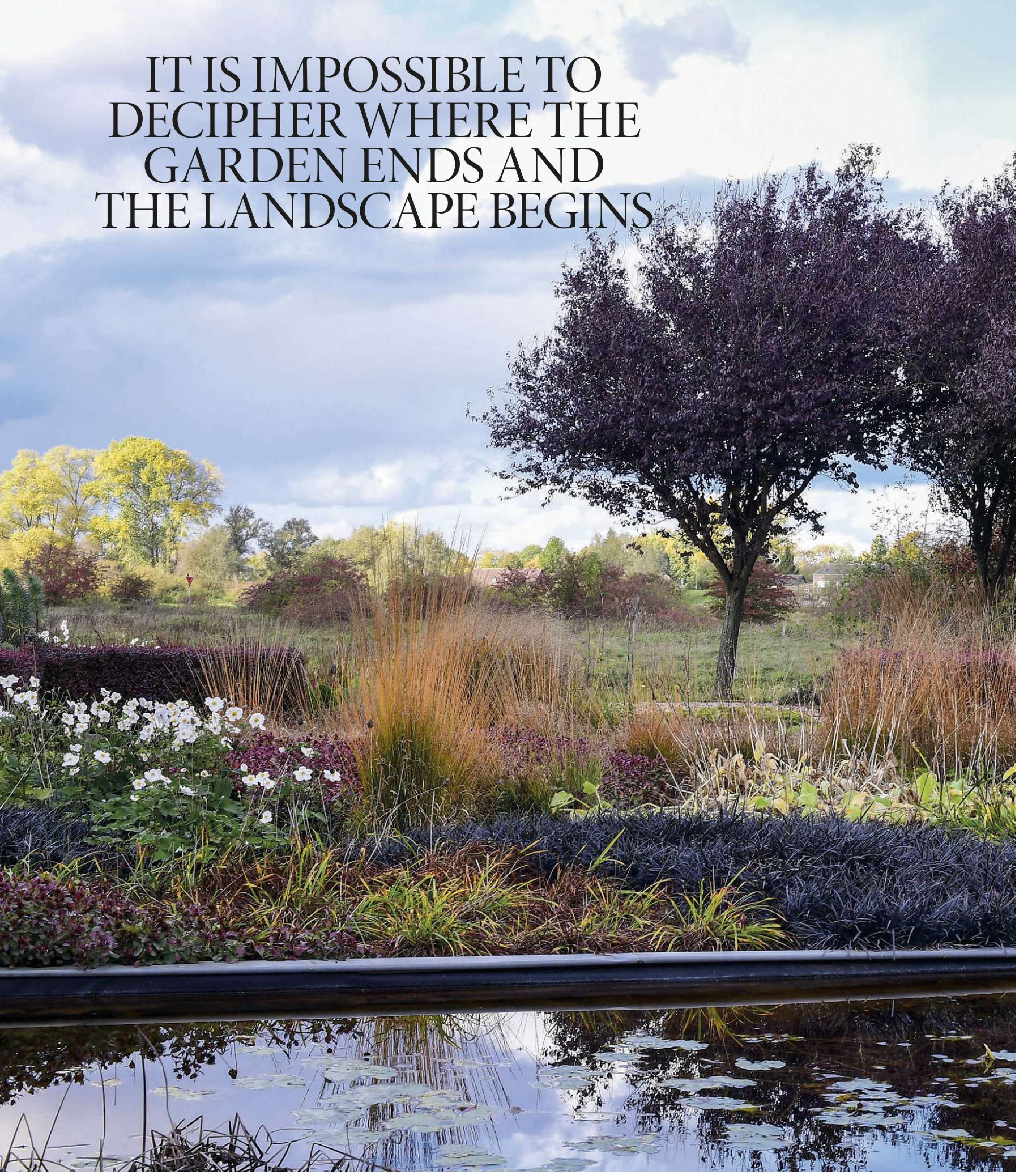
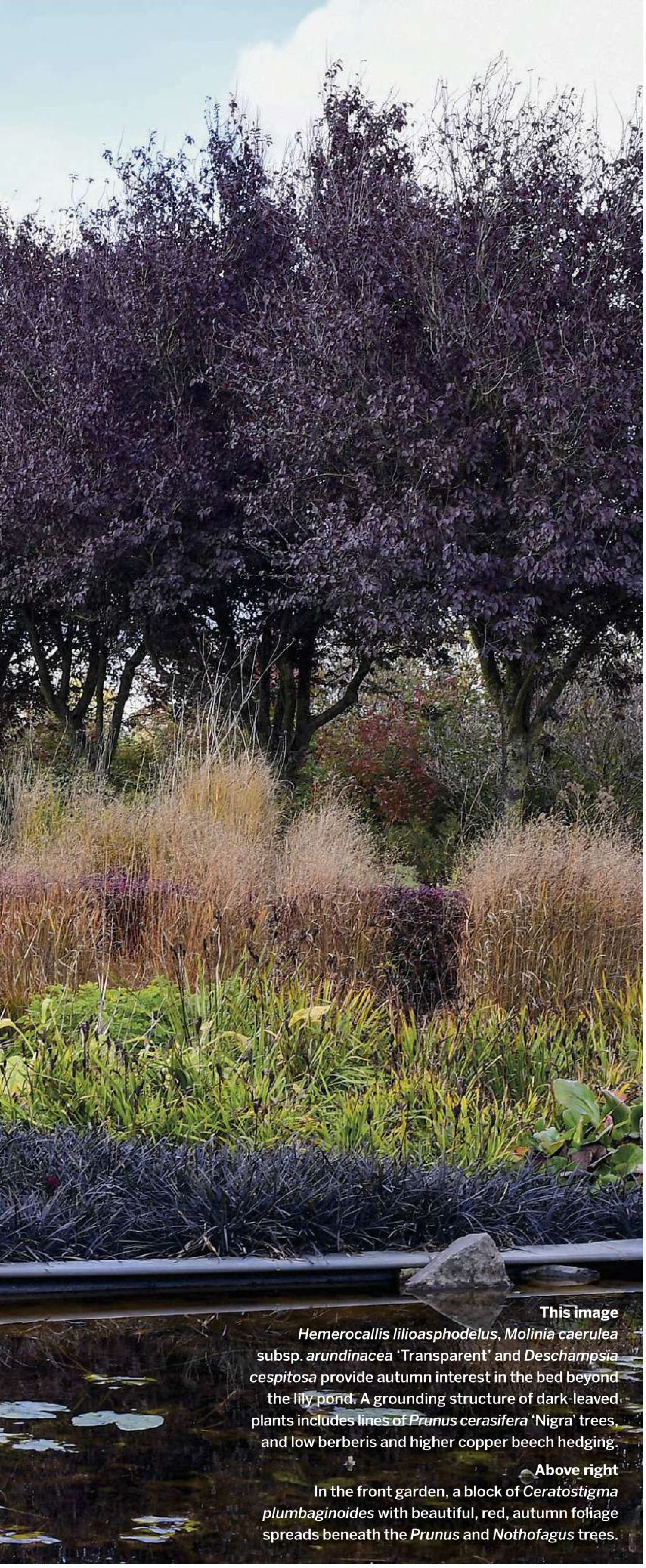
[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.



IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DECIPHER WHERE THE GARDEN ENDS AND THE LANDSCAPE BEGINS



This image
Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus, *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' and *Deschampsia cespitosa* provide autumn interest in the bed beyond the lily pond. A grounding structure of dark-leaved plants includes lines of *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra' trees, and low berberis and higher copper beech hedging.

Above right
In the front garden, a block of *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* with beautiful, red, autumn foliage spreads beneath the *Prunus* and *Nothofagus* trees.

▷ and flurries of *Echinacea purpurea* 'Alba', *Phlox* and *Deschampsia*, as well as *Salvia uliginosa* and *Limonium platyphyllum*. Along both sides of the house there are more planting beds, one designed by plantswoman Lianne Pot, and varied wildflower schemes created from site-specific seed mixes by the company Cruydt-Hoeck.

The garden has clearly been crafted with meticulous attention to detail, and it is proof that much-cited design principles do work. As well as borrowing from the landscape, and starting with a strong structure, Willem has repeated essential dimensions to make the space feel harmonious. "The steel beams in our living space create squares of 4m x 4m," he explains, "so I also used that measurement in different ways in the garden. The gravel squares are 4m x 4m, the ponds are 4m x 8m, the berberis hedges are 2m x 2m."

This has resulted in myriad views – wherever you stand in the garden, there is a different outlook – while cleverly screening the tourists on the busy canal that runs alongside with a simple stand of trees and shrubs. Not that there is much time for the couple to take in the view themselves, with such a large garden to maintain. In summer, they open to visitors – some 1,000 this year – as part of a local gardens group. Autumn is their most mellow time, when they can enjoy the changing colours and developing seedheads, before a frantic burst of winter activity from late January, when they cut it all down and weed and mulch everything.

It has been a steep learning curve, but Willem and Josée couldn't be happier with the result, and Willem has sage advice to offer other gardeners starting out with a new space: "Don't think you will have success in one or two years – it will take ten. Have patience." □

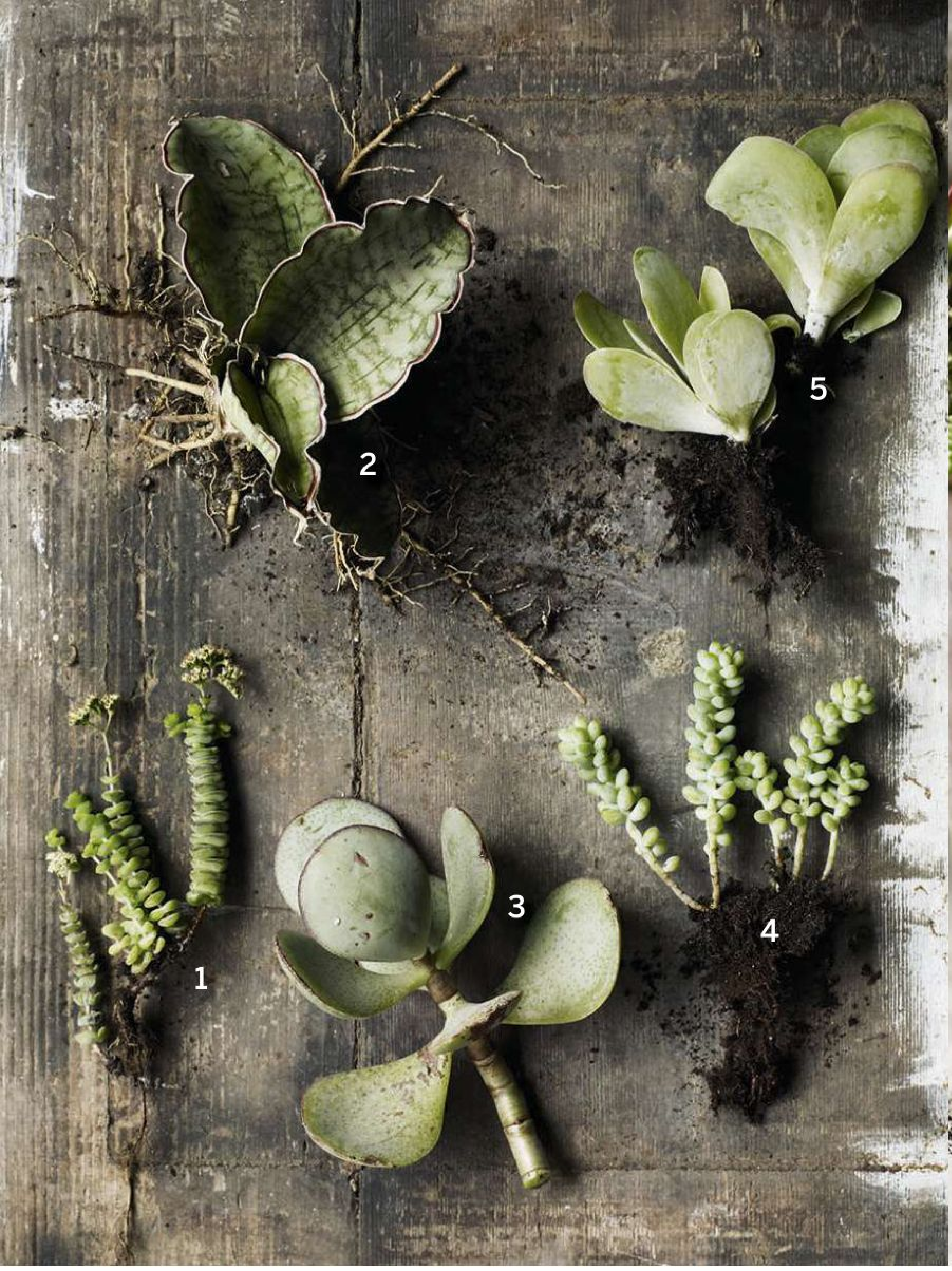
USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Fortmonderweg 47, 8121 SL Olst, the Netherlands. **Tel** +31 (0)570 564 317. **Web** detuinvanfortmond.nl **Open** By appointment.

Coming in from the cold

Head gardener Benjamin William Pope, creates three, stylish displays combining tender succulents and evergreen foliage that can be brought indoors to keep the fresh-green memories of summer alive once frosts threaten

WORDS **BENJAMIN WILLIAM POPE** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**



WARM THOUGHTS

As the nights grow longer and temperatures drop, I like to remind myself of the hot summer days spent in the garden or travelling abroad. In this display the terracotta holds a rustic warmth that is complemented by the cool, monochromatic planting. Succulents are used throughout the entire display and reference their arid growing conditions, hopefully providing an uplifting contrast to the dark days of winter that will soon be upon us.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition
The container is a classic, simple shape, importantly it has a wide top that allows for a generous arrangement. Warmth comes from the weathered terracotta, its subtle markings echoed in the mottled foliage of the sansevieria. Its glaucous tones are repeated throughout the planting, emphasising the texture and form of the plants while perfectly complementing the soft terracotta. Tinges of dark-red detail on some of the foliage highlight the various leaf shapes and bring a warmth to the planting. Mixing bold plants, such as the kalanchoe and sansevieria, with those of a softer texture, such as the sedum and crassula, will provide interesting contrast.

Cultivation and care
Succulents are relatively slow growing so be generous when planting and select a suitable sized pot that will look full when planted. Fill the pot with a soil-based compost and added grit, then begin to add plants by positioning the largest specimens first, before gently filling in gaps with smaller plants. Add additional potting mix as you go to ensure plants are held firm and secure. Once complete top dress with a grit to prevent soil from splashing on the plants when watering. Use a narrow trowel, or a hori hori, to help ensure you get the potting mix and grit into difficult, hard-to-reach gaps. These are all tender plants that need a frost-free site, so in winter bring indoors to a warm, sunny spot, and water sparingly in winter months.

Plants

1 ***Crassula rupestris*** **subsp.** ***marnieriana*** **'Hottentot'**
Succulent with snake-like stem. Best in sun. 15cm. RHS H2[†].

2 ***Sansevieria kirkii*** **'Silver Blue'**
Unusual sansevieria with thick blue-green leaves. 20cm. RHS H1.

3 ***Crassula arborescens***
Branching succulent with flat blue-grey leaves that have a burgundy margin. Prefers sun. 1.2m. RHS H2.

4 ***Sedum burrito*** Low-growing succulent with thick trailing stems. Prefers sun. 1m. RHS H2.

5 ***Kalanchoe luciae***
Large, paddle-shaped leaves. Prefers a sunny frost-free site. 50cm. AGM*. RHS H2.

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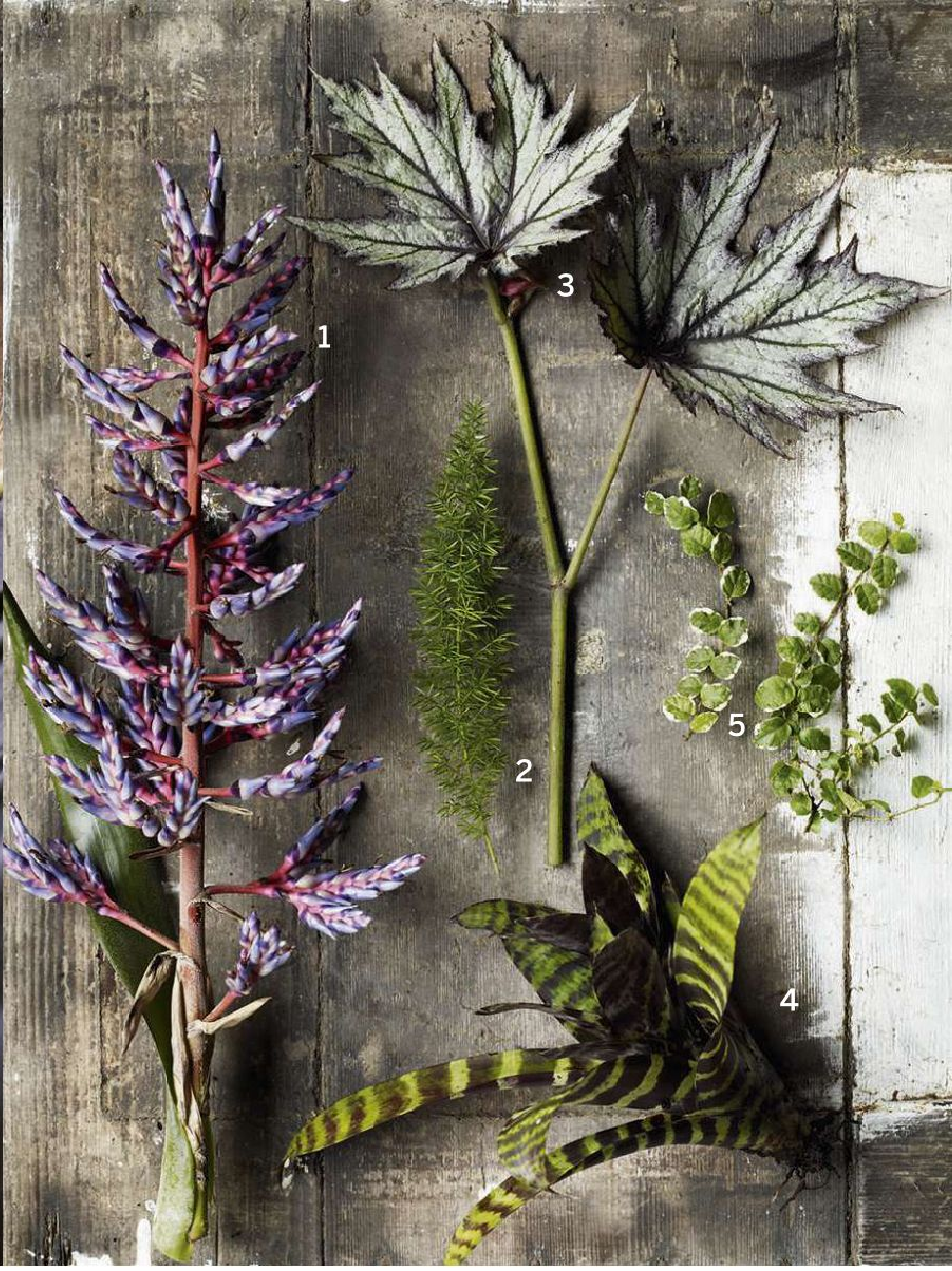
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



A TROPICAL ESCAPE

As a gardener, I hold a special place in my heart for Victorian greenhouses, which are an invaluable warm refuge on a cold day. Spilling with foliage, this antique bird cage encapsulates the elegant engineering of those elborate structures, and this plant-rich display harks back to the houseplant displays associated with a bygone era. An attractive and alternative way of growing a few houseplants together, while adding a little bit of Victorian grandeur to the home.

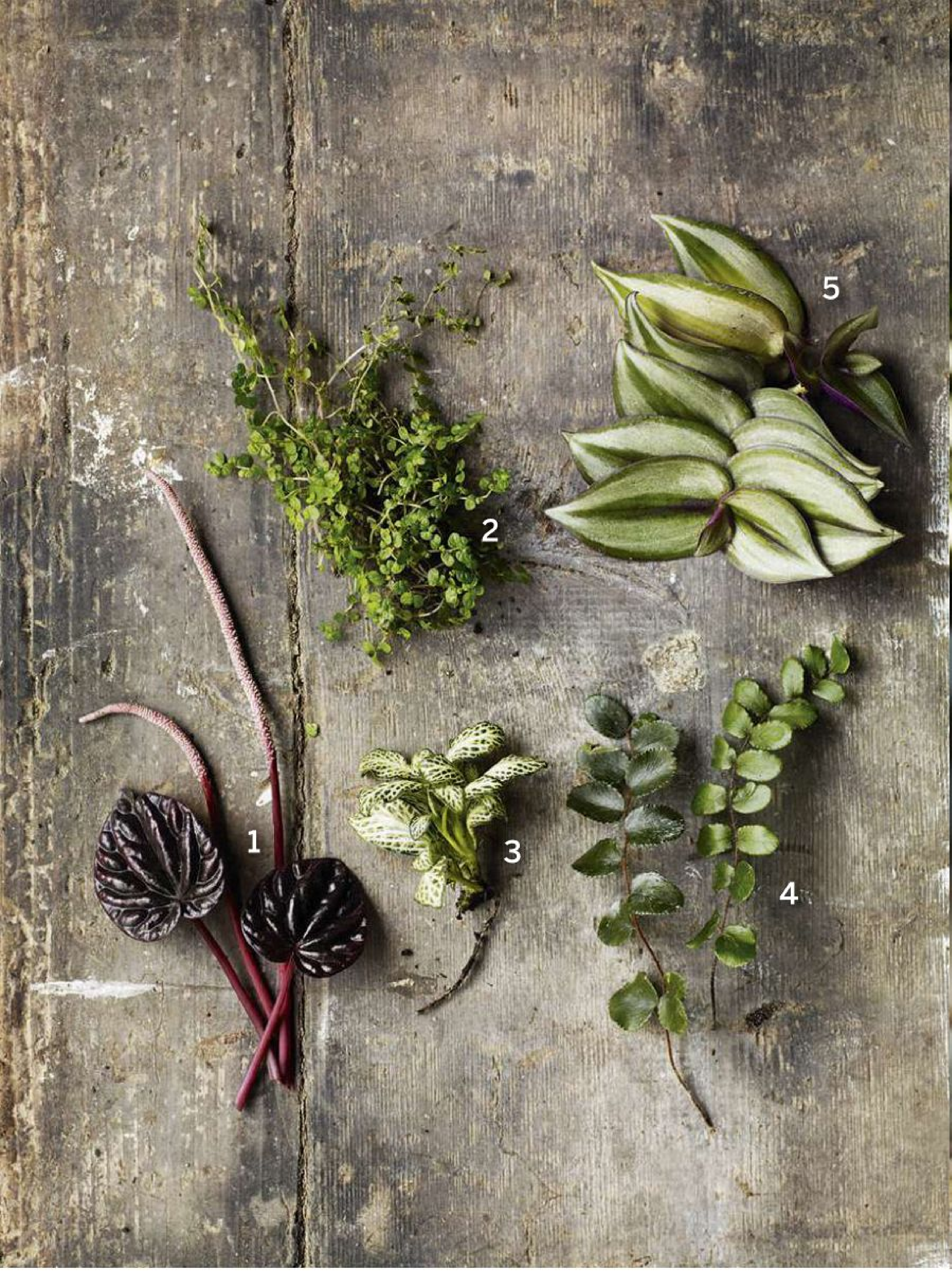
How to achieve the look

Container and composition
Bird cages, such as this, often come up for sale at antique and flea markets and there are many modern reproductions available, although they lack the patina that adds to this cage's charm. Whether old or new, the best cages are those with elegant curves and detail in the metal work. The size of the cage will guide your plant choice but using bold foliage and compatible growing species will help ensure success. For this display the linear leaves of the aechmea and colourful begonia foliage occupy the centre of the arrangement, embellished by the asparagus fern and referenced by the stripy vriesea. The climbing fig gently trails around the base of the arrangement, softly filling any gaps while escaping through the bars.

Cultivation and care
Line the base of the cage with chicken wire and moss to create a deep planting tray that will allow more room for root growth. As with most containers, plant the main specimens first in a rich, peat-free compost that is moisture-retentive yet free-draining. Continue the arrangement adding the soft ferns and other foliage. The plants will grow quickly, so start with smaller specimens, allowing them to establish and grow through the bars, enhancing the look. Water regularly to prevent from drying out, using a dilute liquid feed in the summer months. Prune old flowers and excessive growth to maintain the look and replant annually at the start of the growing season.

Plants

1 *Aechmea* 'Blue Rain'
Tender epiphyte with eye-catching flower spike. Prefers light shade. 90cm. RHS H1B.
2 *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myersii'
Evergreen, fern-like perennial. Best in a light shade. 50cm. RHS H1C.
3 *Begonia* 'Connee Boswell'
Rhizomatous begonia with a bushy habit and striking leaves. Prefers light shade. 60cm. RHS H1B.
4 *Vriesea splendens*
Striking bromeliad with heavily banded leaves. Prefers light shade. 45cm. RHS H1B.
5 *Ficus pumila* 'Variegata'
Evergreen climbing fig. Sun to light shade. 3m. AGM. RHS H1C.



SOMETHING SWEET

Much like the seasons, fashions come and go with the passing of time. The bottle garden is one such trend that is currently experiencing a revival and is something from which this display takes inspiration. Using a cake stand as a base, the plants can nestle beneath its domed glass cloche, which rests loosely on a layer of pebbles. Sitting on a kitchen work top, even with the dome removed, these tender houseplants gently entangle in a suitably sweet display that looks good enough to eat.

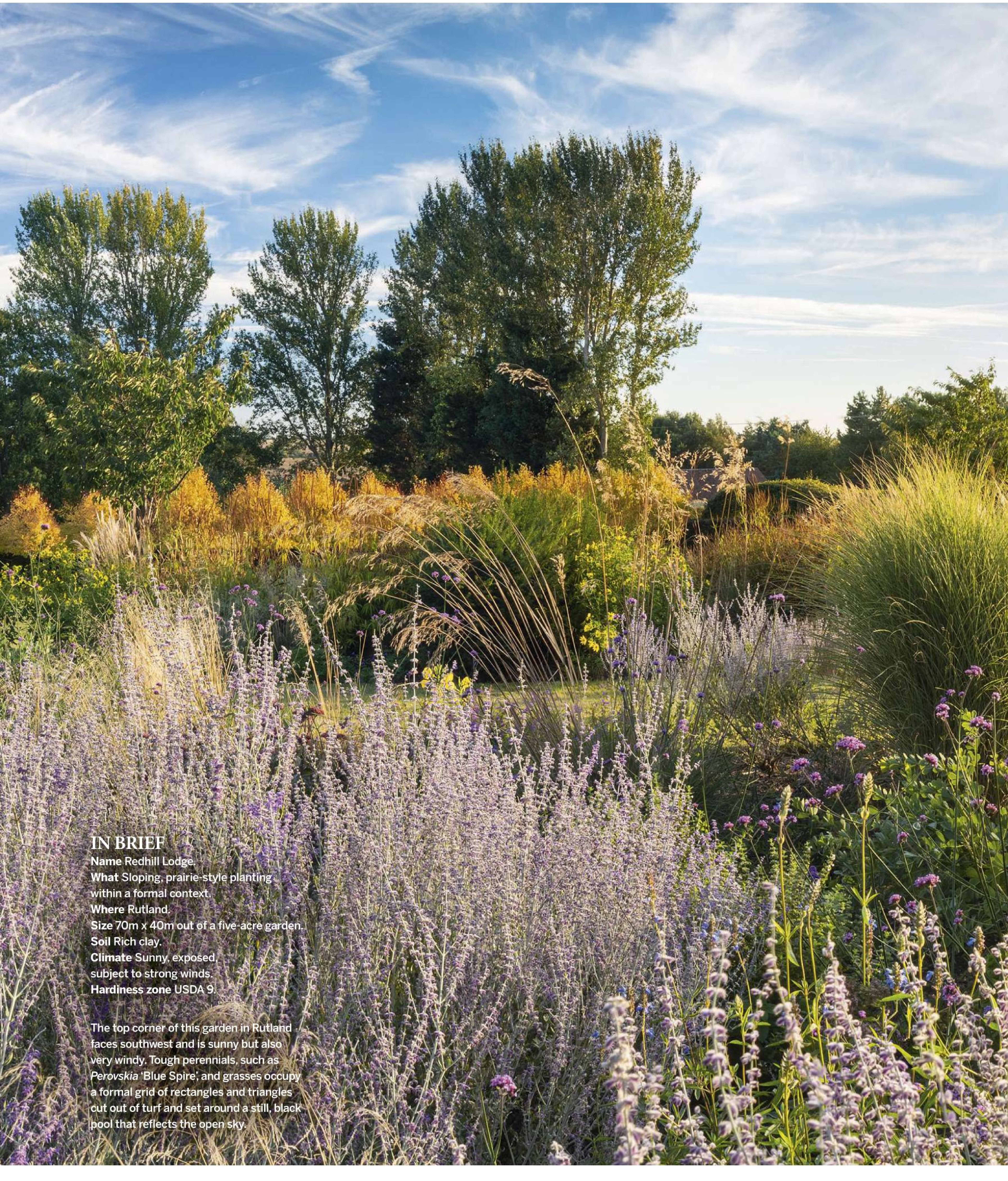
How to achieve the look

Container and composition
The base of the cake stand needs to have a lip enabling it to hold some compost, but, if you can't find a suitable one then a large, upturned sweet jar is a good alternative. The plum-coloured peperomia is used to make a striking focal point at the summit of this arrangement, while its dramatic colour is repeated in the undersides of the tradescantia leaves. Other creeping plants, such as the fittonia and soleirolia mesh together to form a carpet of foliage while the fronds of the pellaea arch above to give the arrangement some lift. Clusters of pebbles reinforce the sides of the planting and raise the height of the dome when placed on top, ensuring a small air gap to prevent the build-up of excessive condensation.

Cultivation and care
Use small, starter plants that can be easily found in the houseplant section of most garden centres. Plant into a rich, peat-free potting compost, beginning from the outside rim and working towards the centre, building the compost depth as you go. As well as creating a true bottle-garden feel, the glass dome will provide some welcome humidity to the plants while they establish, so while planting regularly check that it will sit comfortably and evenly on the clusters of pebbles. Water in gently and repeat whenever the compost begins to dry out, incorporating a dilute liquid feed during the summer months. Keep away from direct sunlight.

Plants

1 *Peperomia caperata* 'Schumi Red Sienna' Compact evergreen. Prefers light shade and dislikes being too wet. 20cm. RHS H1B.
2 *Soleirolia soleirolii*
Matt-forming perennial. Happy in sun or part shade. 10cm. RHS H4.
3 *Fittonia albivenis* Argyroneura Group Low-growing foliage plant with attractive ovate leaves. Prefers a lightly shaded frost-free site. 40cm. AGM. RHS H1B.
4 *Pellaea rotundifolia*
Attractive evergreen fern. Prefers light shade. 40cm. AGM. RHS H2.
5 *Tradescantia zebrina*
Trailing perennial with striped foliage. Best in light shade. 40cm. RHS H1C.



IN BRIEF

Name Redhill Lodge.
What Sloping, prairie-style planting within a formal context.
Where Rutland.
Size 70m x 40m out of a five-acre garden.
Soil Rich clay.
Climate Sunny, exposed, subject to strong winds.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The top corner of this garden in Rutland faces southwest and is sunny but also very windy. Tough perennials, such as *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire', and grasses occupy a formal grid of rectangles and triangles cut out of turf and set around a still, black pool that reflects the open sky.

Sweeping statement

Formal design elements and wild, breezy planting lend a fresh perspective to a sloping, prairie-style garden that follows the ebb and flow of the rolling Rutland landscape

WORDS **KENDRA WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

For plants, a sunny slope is a comfortable dwelling place, with welcome drainage and plenty of light. For people, a garden incline that is steady and continuous can be less pleasing; we require some horizontals, not least for a house. Between the top and bottom of Sue Moffitt's five acres in rural Rutland, there is a difference of eight metres in height. Her response has been to reach even higher, with a steep viewing mound in the site's uppermost corner. On climbing to the summit – which is irresistible – it is clear why the landform was the first part of this structured prairie garden to be developed.

For one thing, without the mound the quiet drama of the surrounding countryside – a magnificent brick viaduct, used by the Kettering to Oakham railway line, spanning the Welland Valley to the south, and a wooden windmill protruding over the fields to the north – would be hidden behind tall beech hedges. For another, the view from the top of the mound clarifies the shape of a sloping parterre that is hard to distinguish at ground level, being filled with voluminous, loose planting that is itself high, at the end of the season.

At the centre of the planted grid lies a black square of still water, open to the sky and most emphatically a reflecting pool – reminiscent of the larger, but equally calming, minimal pool at Le Jardin Plume near Rouen in northern France, the former seven-acre apple orchard transformed over the past 20 years by Patrick and Sylvie Quibel. Hoping to fill this area with plants that could cope with the wind and exposure of the east midlands site, Sue was looking for ideas on combining naturalism with her own formal tendencies. On seeing pictures of the grassy geometry at Le Jardin Plume, a design rooted in the French traditions of parterres and potagers, Sue had her 'Yes!' moment.

Just as the Quibels' land in France was repurposed for a garden, so too was the Moffitts' farmland-turned-scrub. An added challenge for the Moffitts was that conifers had been used as space-fillers, with dense avenues of Leyland cypress trees running four deep all around the boundary. Sue first discovered the property while out cycling, and was captivated by its atmosphere. "There was something mysterious about it," she muses. Besides the air of intrigue, the property housed a bungalow with a substantial plot behind it, perfect for building a large new house.

The Moffitts removed the last hundred leylandii this year, having long since discovered why the conifers had been so densely planted. "On a windy day it's wild out there," says Sue. Fortunately the removal process revealed some good, mature trees, including a pair of weeping beeches that frame the oak storage-cum-workshed by the prairie garden, and a small ring of ash trees that now form an unusually romantic turning circle by the front door. A perimeter hedge of beech stands tall again, cut into waves that reflect the rolling fields beyond.

Most of the plants in Sue's perennial garden are tall by late summer, hitting shoulder height at least. The experience is more immersive than tiered planting in a traditional long border. A climb up the viewing mound reveals that the garden is anchored with good structure, even more distinct in winter when the planting has faded back, and in spring as it comes to life again.

Sue's choice of planting around the garden's sunny and windy summit is led entirely by conditions. *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail' was one of the first plants to go in, and last year she added eupatoriums and *Geum* 'Borisii'. The sizeable area was originally populated by six plant types and ten years later the selection still shows economy. The ethos up here is 'split and divide', as articulated by Sue's design partner David Moffitt. David studied at Sheffield University under Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough and came on board with the garden after the hard landscaping had been done. "David is highly creative," says Sue. "He has brought the garden on to a new level."

Prairie perennials have thrived here because their feet are in soil that is rich, while the exposure keeps them lean and strong. Other plants such as *Salvia uliginosa* that have done too well in more luxurious herbaceous borders around the garden have been sent to the prairie boot camp to calm them down. Not all of the original protagonists are still in evidence; *Echinacea purpurea* gave up on the heavy soil, while *Verbena bonariensis* comes and goes. Happily, the neat grid of rectangles and triangles accommodates freedom of movement. Gaps are made less obvious by groundcover in the form of *Geranium* 'Brookside', *Alchemilla mollis* and a *Sanguisorba* that arrived of its own accord.

If 'low maintenance' means less thinking as well as less doing, then this area of Sue Moffitt's garden is a model of its kind, with the tricky question of colour removed entirely. "The rest of the garden has been colour-themed, but up here it doesn't worry me," she says. When the structure is there, texture comes to the fore: "If it works in black and white, it works in colour." □

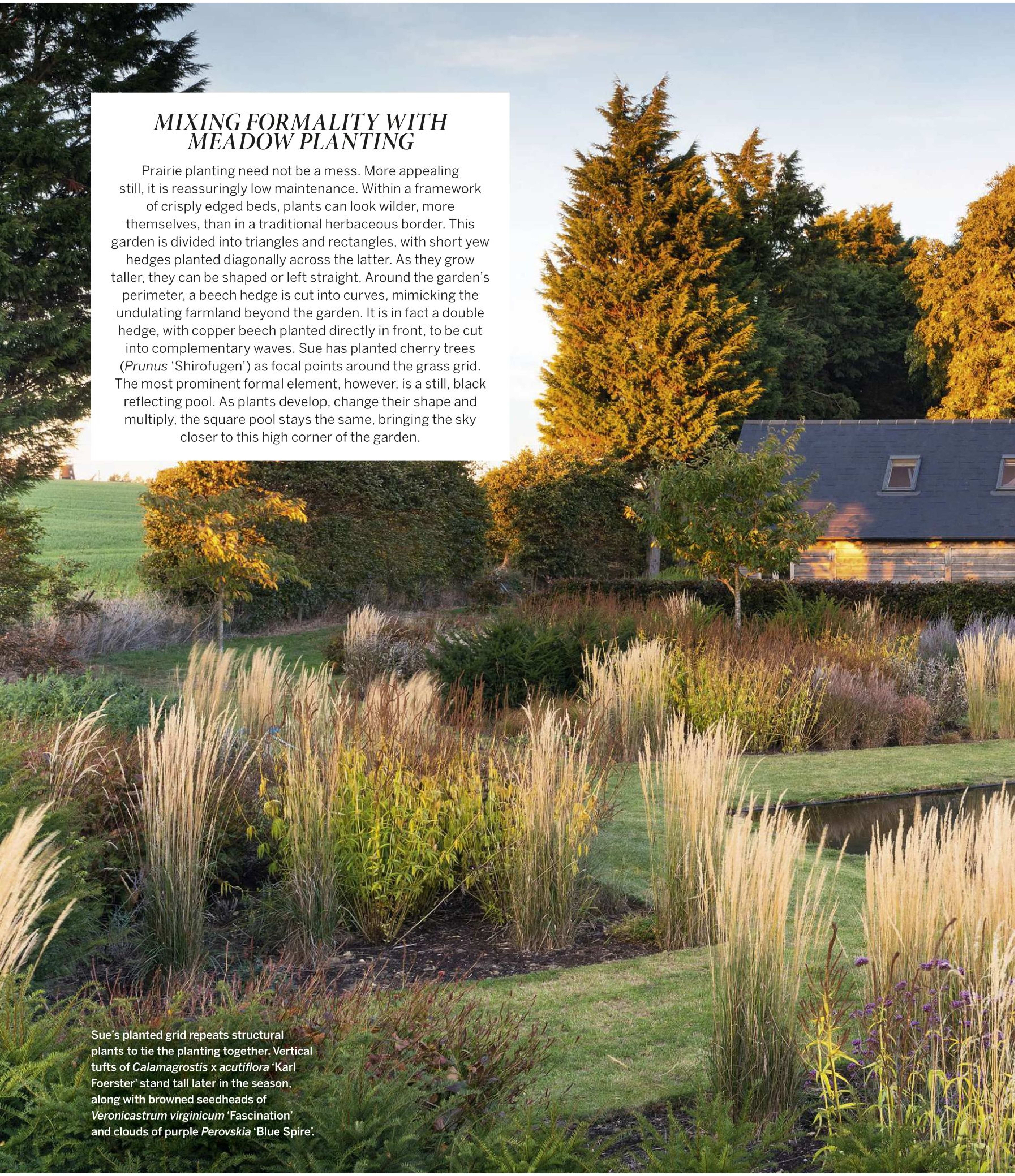
USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Redhill Lodge, Seaton Road, Barrowden, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8EN. **Tel** 07894 064789. **Open** The garden is open by appointment under the National Garden Scheme. Check the ngs.org.uk for openings in 2020.

Turn the page to see more of Sue's garden and its key plants ▷

Prairie perennials thrive here because their feet are in soil that is rich, while the exposure keeps them lean and strong

A pair of weeping beech mark the entrance to the prairie garden, next to an oak building built to accommodate machinery and a potting shed.



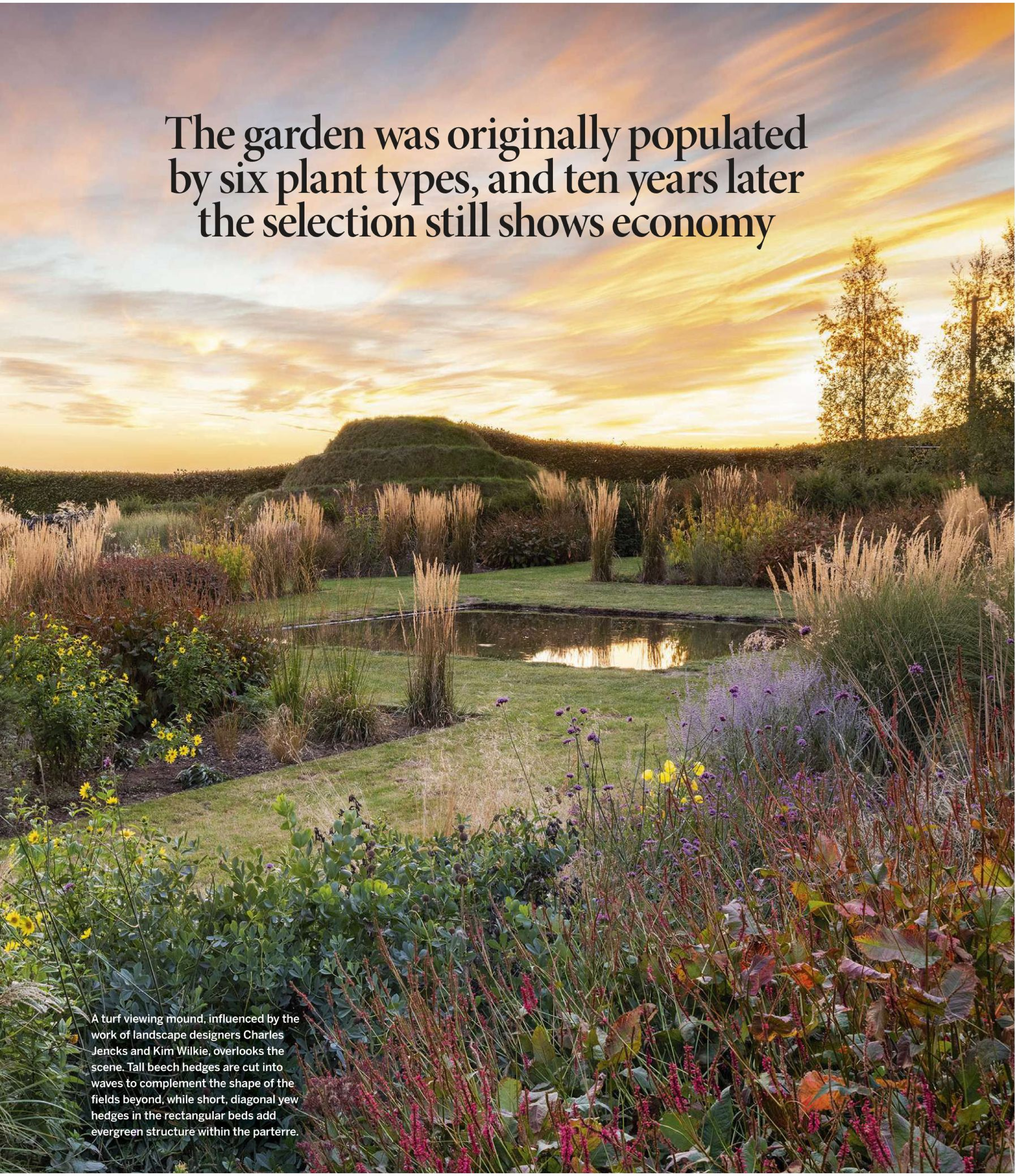
MIXING FORMALITY WITH MEADOW PLANTING

Prairie planting need not be a mess. More appealing still, it is reassuringly low maintenance. Within a framework of crisply edged beds, plants can look wilder, more themselves, than in a traditional herbaceous border. This garden is divided into triangles and rectangles, with short yew hedges planted diagonally across the latter. As they grow taller, they can be shaped or left straight. Around the garden's perimeter, a beech hedge is cut into curves, mimicking the undulating farmland beyond the garden. It is in fact a double hedge, with copper beech planted directly in front, to be cut into complementary waves. Sue has planted cherry trees (*Prunus* 'Shirofugen') as focal points around the grass grid. The most prominent formal element, however, is a still, black reflecting pool. As plants develop, change their shape and multiply, the square pool stays the same, bringing the sky closer to this high corner of the garden.

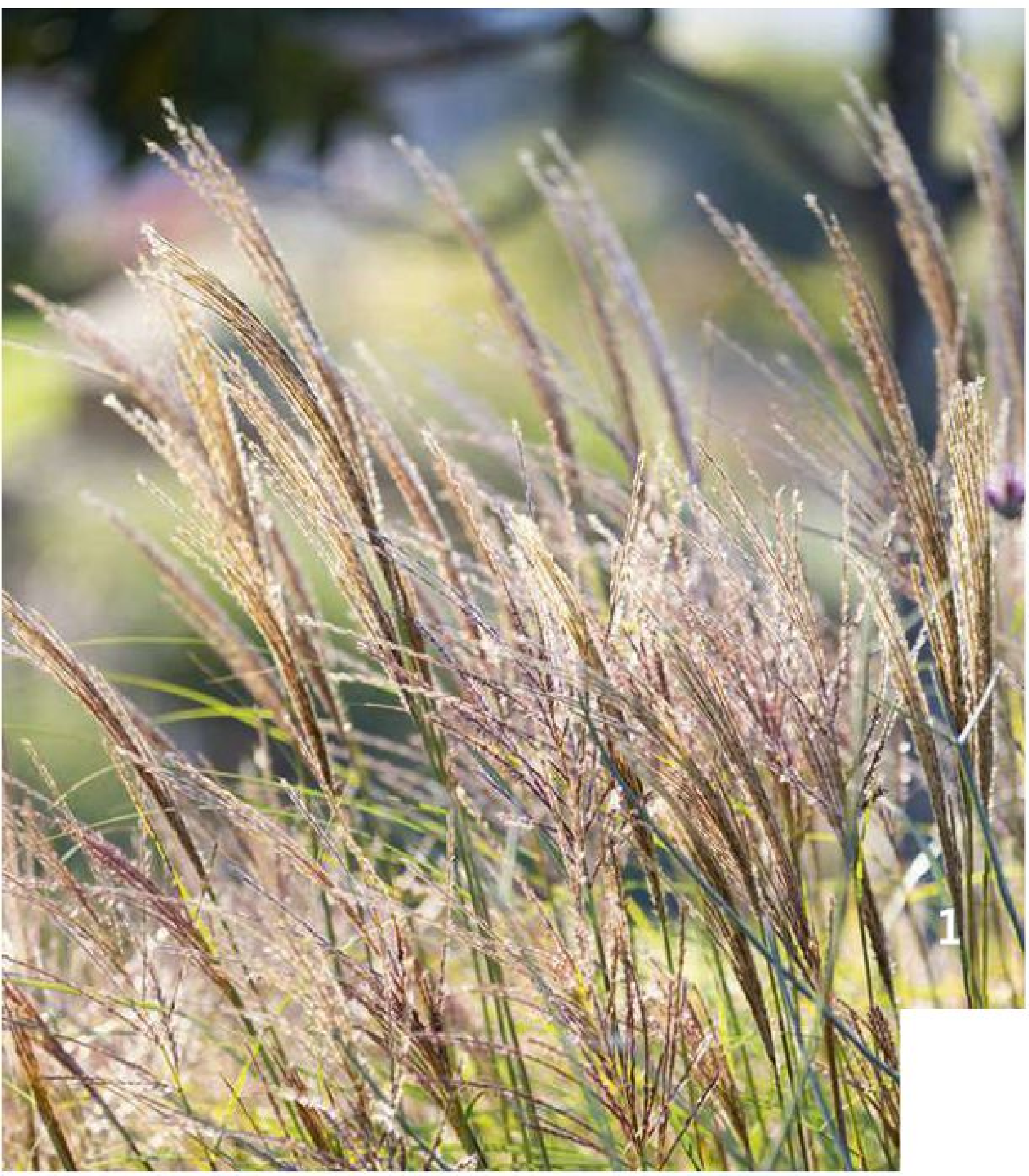
Sue's planted grid repeats structural plants to tie the planting together. Vertical tufts of *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' stand tall later in the season, along with browned seedheads of *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' and clouds of purple *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire'.

When the structure is there, texture comes to the fore and the question of colour is removed

The garden was originally populated by six plant types, and ten years later the selection still shows economy



A turf viewing mound, influenced by the work of landscape designers Charles Jencks and Kim Wilkie, overlooks the scene. Tall beech hedges are cut into waves to complement the shape of the fields beyond, while short, diagonal yew hedges in the rectangular beds add evergreen structure within the parterre.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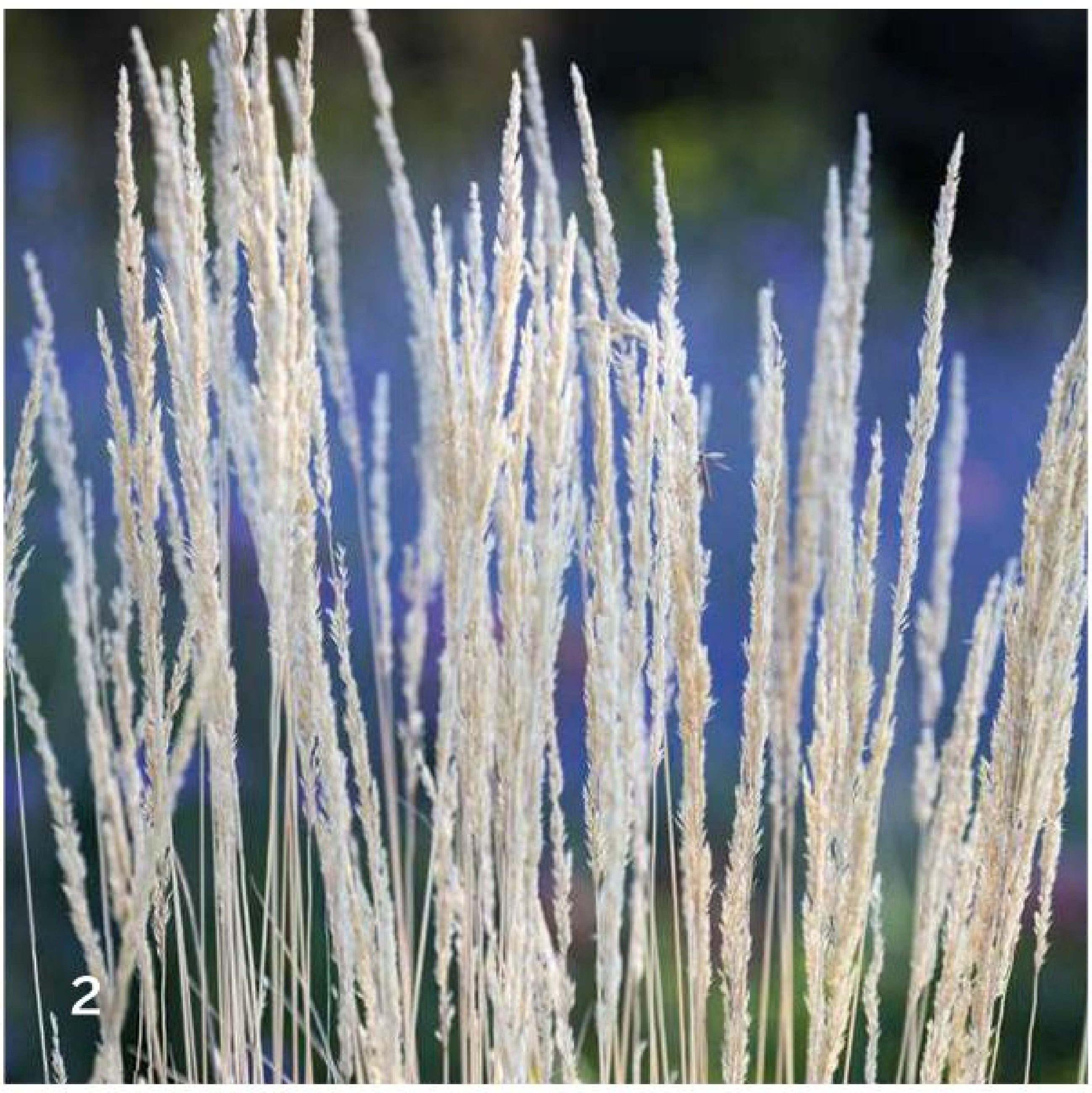
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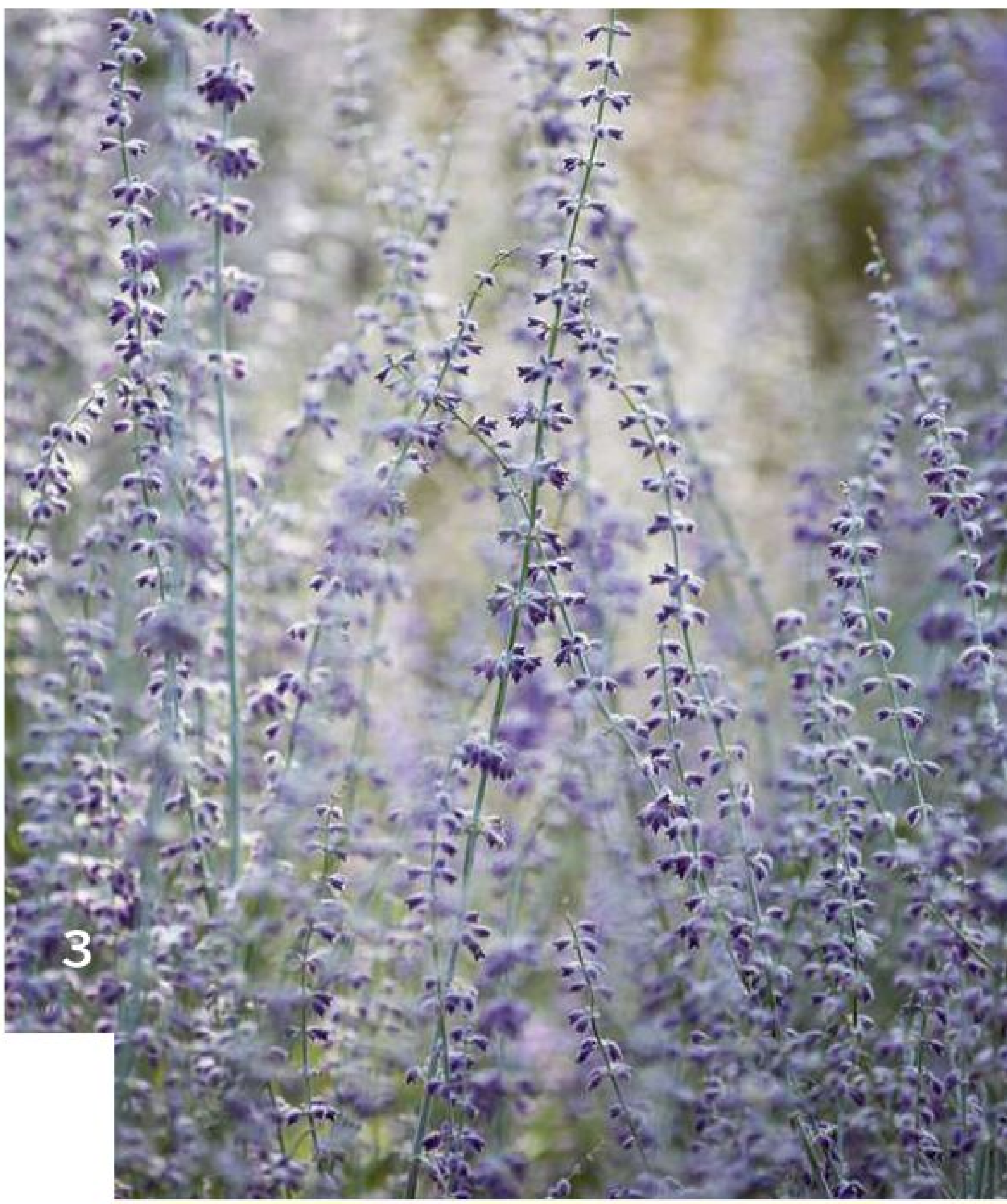
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8 KEY PLANTS

1 *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Ferner Osten'
Arching, green foliage supports dark-red flower plumes in summer, and pale, feathery seedheads catch the light in winter. 1.5m. AGM*. RHS H6†.

2 *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
Provides movement in summer but also valuable interest in winter when golden tufts reflect the low sun. 90cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire'
Clouds of felty, whitish stems bear small violet-blue flowers in late summer and autumn. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

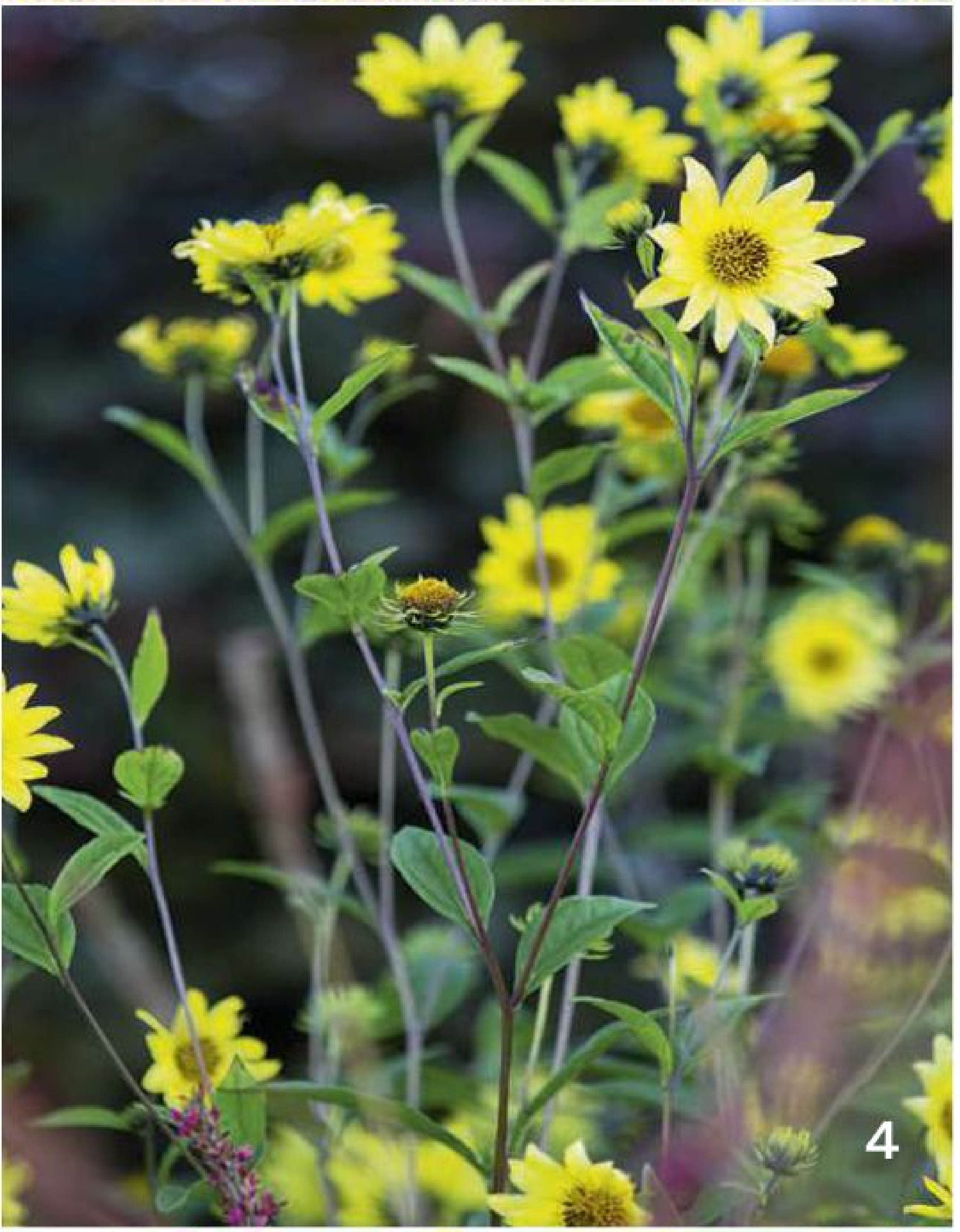
4 *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen'
These branching sunflowers with small heads tolerate some exposure but benefit from the protection of other tall plants. 2m. AGM. RHS H4.

5 *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona'
Pale, starry flowers on glaucous foliage through late summer and autumn. Prone to root rot in poor drainage, it thrives in Sue's heavy soil because of the sun, exposure and sloping situation. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

6 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail'
Tall, clump-forming groundcover, with fresh, ovate foliage and narrow, crimson flowers. Spreads freely in moist, heavy soil. 1.2m. RHS H7.

7 *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination'
Racemes of lilac flowers on tall stems provide early colour. Seedheads take on a fasciated, flattened appearance in winter. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

8 *Echinops ritro* 'Veitch's Blue'
Elegant, blue, globe thistles are highly attractive to pollinators. Cut back after the first flush to encourage further flowering, and deadhead in autumn to curb excessive self-seeding. 90cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.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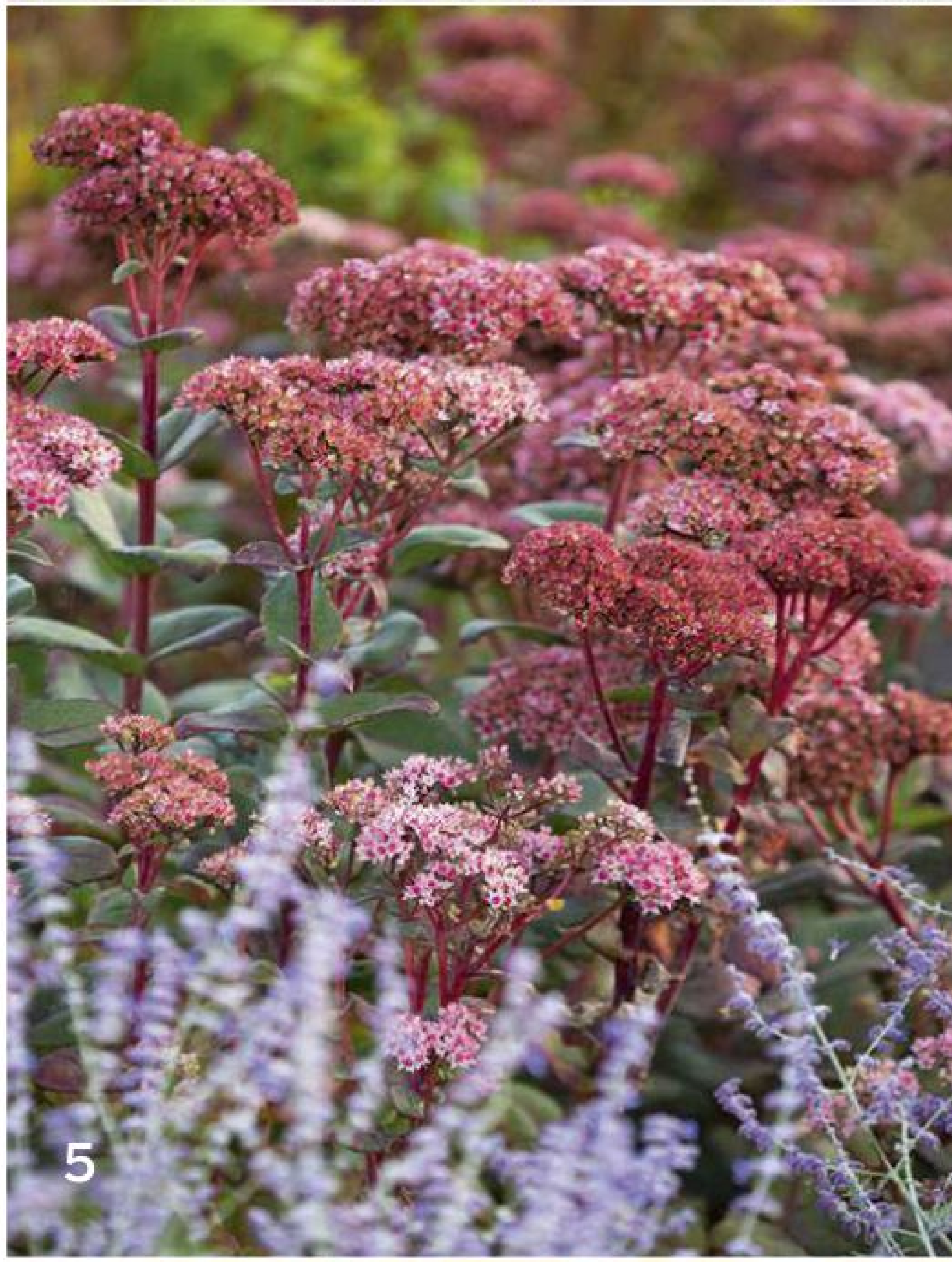
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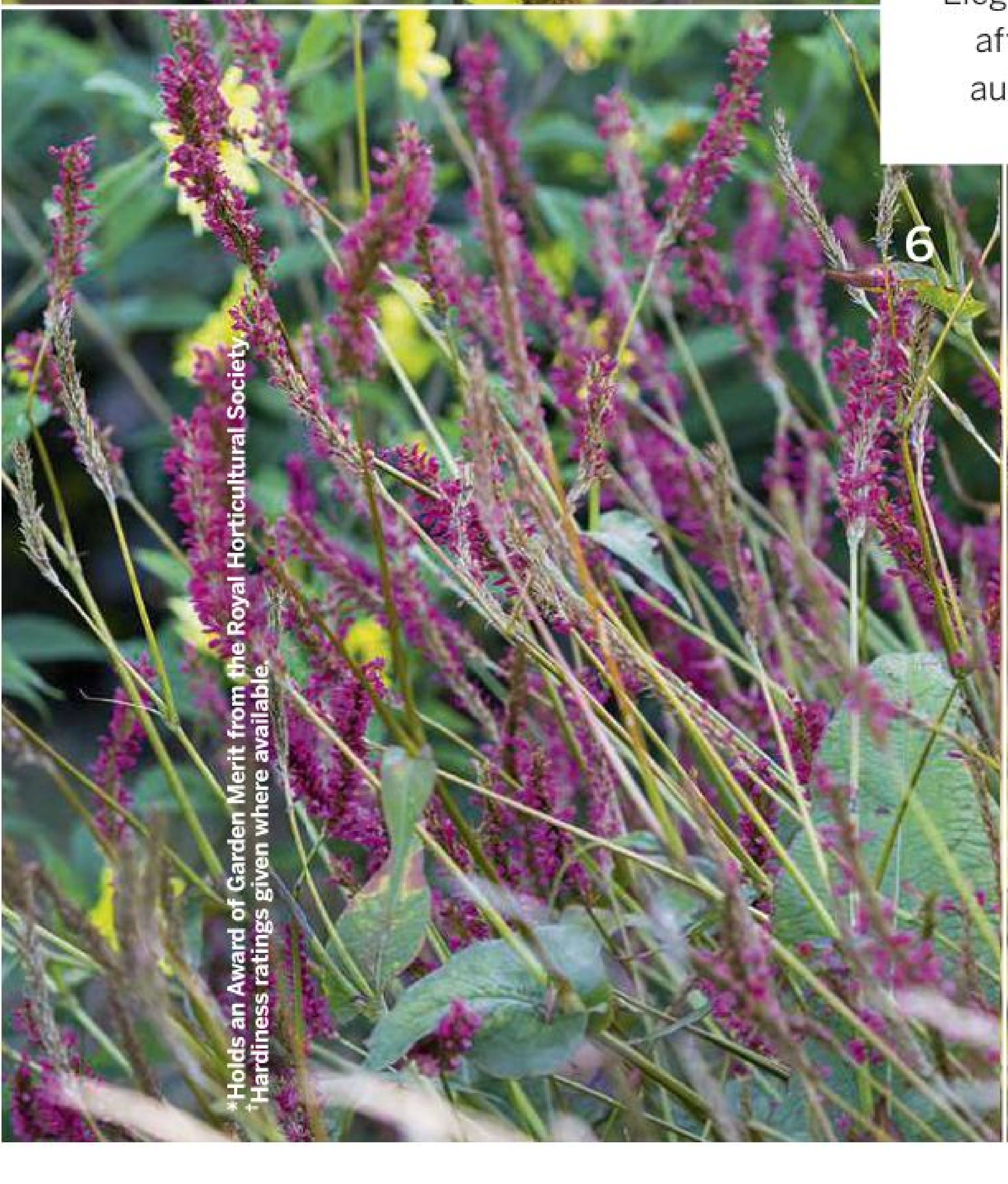
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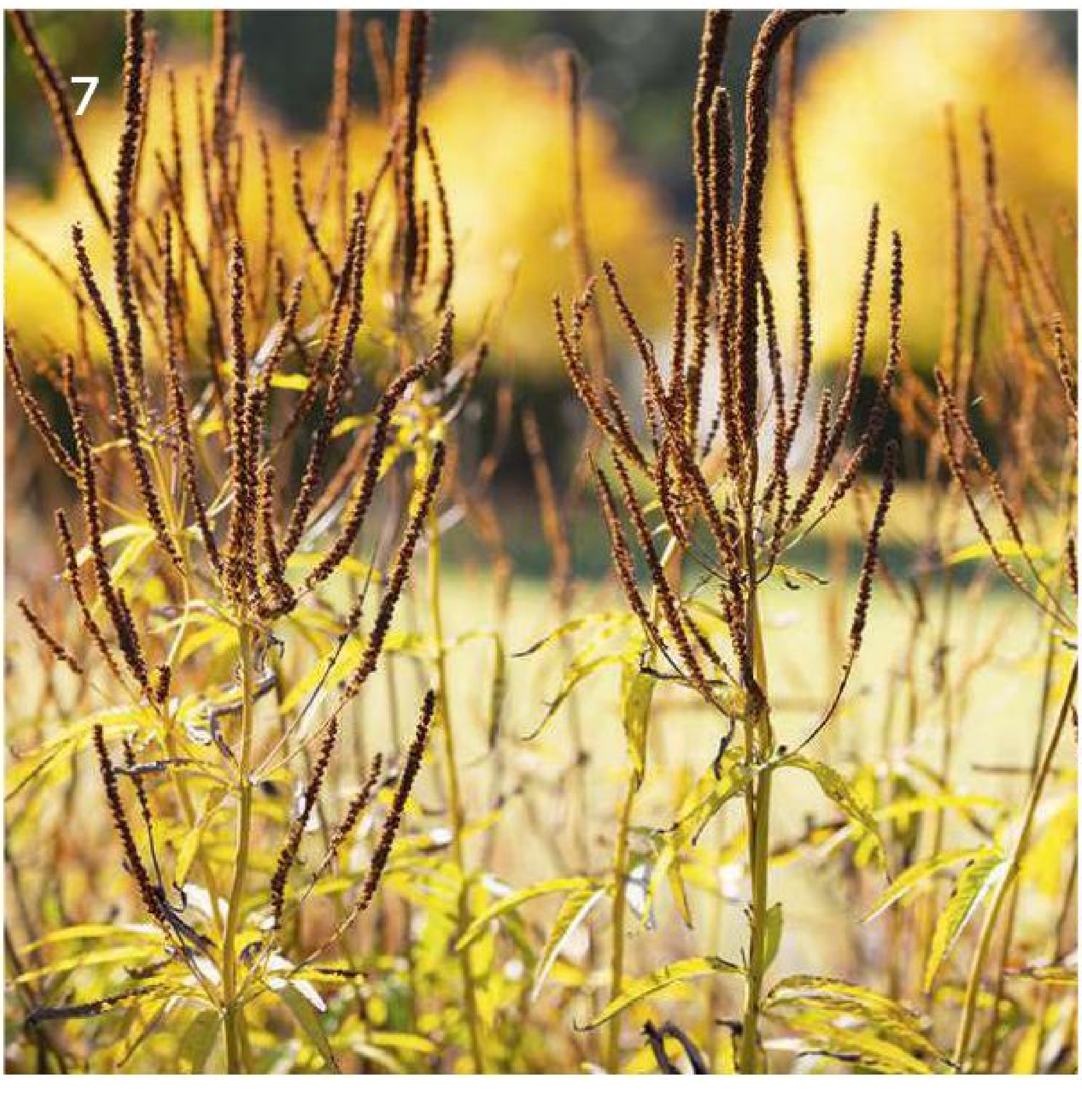
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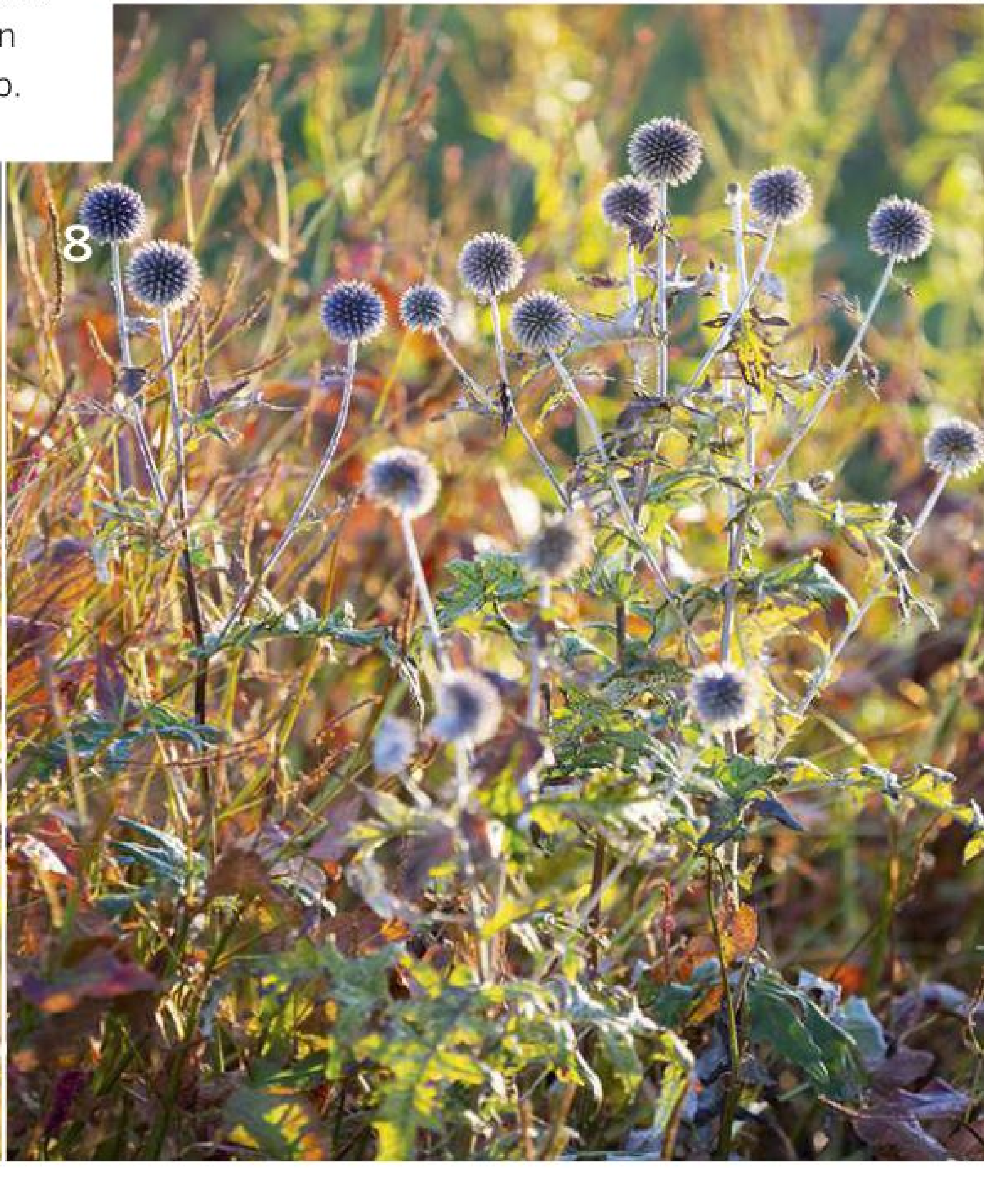
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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

SHIRLEY SHERWOOD

The eponymous founder of one of Kew's art galleries on a childhood spent discovering plants through a giant magnifying glass and, more laterly, illustrations in a Bangkok hairdresser's

WORDS HILARY BURDEN PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

It is a measure of the drive of Shirley Sherwood, four years shy of 90, that despite suffering from the debilitating effects of lupus she is spending the week we meet moving paintings. Precious botanical artworks from her collection are being prepared for exhibition in the gallery that bears her name in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. She is busy curating it from both her London and Oxfordshire homes, confessing: "It is almost my swan song."

From a collection of more than 800 works stored in climate-controlled, carpet-lined shelves, 150 paintings have been chosen for the show, and 270 for an accompanying book. All works were either commissioned or collected by Shirley over 30 years from more than 35 countries that she has visited, thanks to the railway and hotel interests of her shipping-magnate husband. The couple's passions are inextricably entwined, a point Shirley acknowledges in her wry, matter-of-fact style.

"My husband was buying the Ritz in Madrid at the time," she says, by way of explaining how she came across 6,000 paintings made by Indian artisans in South America that were shipped back to Spain in the 1880s. "It's the thing about being lucky," she says. "I made this collection of contemporary art when no one else was really interested."

I MADE THIS COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ART WHEN NO ONE ELSE WAS REALLY INTERESTED

Shirley's life-long love of plants began while visiting her godfather, the last Governor of British India's North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan). "I was nine years old and had been given a large magnifying glass which opened up a whole new world," she remembers. "The car would brake and I would make a frantic dash into the countryside to find out if that flash of colour was a 'new' specimen – or just new to me."

Those childhood memories signal an advanced appreciation in a young mind of science and beauty. While Shirley went on to read Botany at Oxford, where the emphasis was on genetics and the new study of ecology – she also made time to explore the botany department's other historical material, including the original works of 18th-century botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer.

After her degree Shirley spent several years working in drug development. Then in the 1980s, she started the *Orient-Express* magazine, a publication about the hotels and trains developed by her second husband, the British-based American businessman James Sherwood. While looking for inspiration for features, she attended a lecture on botanical painting at the Royal Horticultural Society by Dr Brinsley Burbidge. Shirley was hooked.

Her first purchase was a painting of wild orchids by Pandora Sellars, followed by commissions of plant portraits of her favourite plants grown at the family home in Hinton, Oxfordshire – an estate with origins back to the Norman Conquest.

Shirley cites artists Rory McEwen and Margaret Mee as early influences. For Shirley, Mee in particular has been formidable because of how the artist ventured alone into the Amazon rainforest to paint the plants she felt were endangered."Some of the plants Mee painted have not been found again," says Shirley.

Shirley's embryo collection grew and travelled, first to Cambridge Cottage, Kew, then to the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation in Pittsburgh, then a roll call of other cities including New York, Tokyo, Sydney, Cape Town, Edinburgh and, at the invitation of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

In 2005 Shirley returned to her alma mater to curate an exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum. An elaborate jigsaw puzzle, matching and contrasting treasures once hidden in the University's library with paintings from her own contemporary collection, it was one of the most popular exhibitions for years. In the wake of such success, and at the instigation of Peter Crane, former director of Kew, in 2008 the Sherwood family funded the building of the Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art at Kew.

With her generous philanthropic spirit Shirley continues to embrace a variety of leading artists. She is still a global traveller, and still has the eye of a planthunter, discovering the work of the Thai artist Phansakdi Chakkaphak ten years ago when she spotted one of his paintings on the wall of a Bangkok hairdresser's.

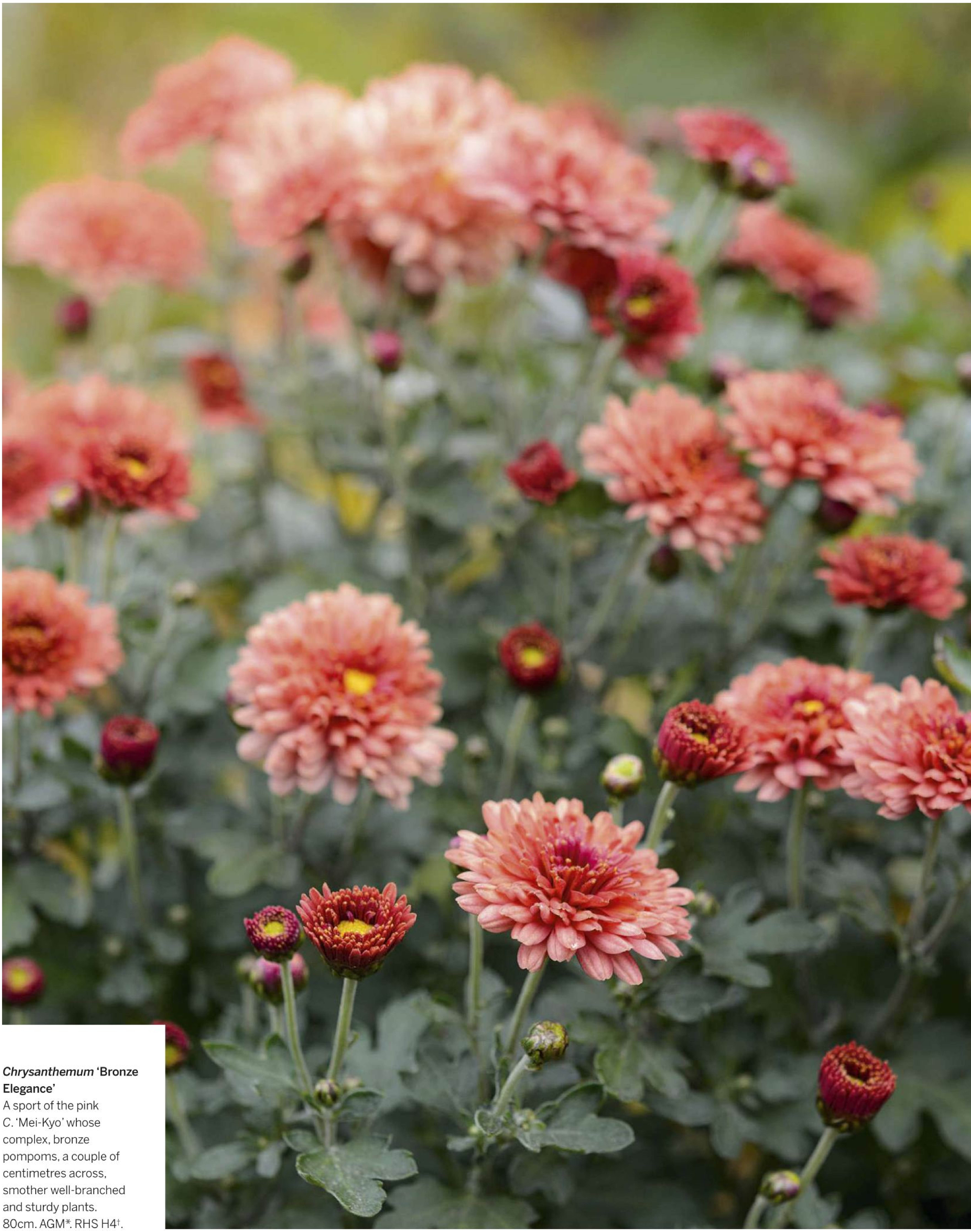
In 2012, Shirley was awarded an OBE for her services to botanical art and in August this year she was awarded the International Award of Excellence in Conservation 2019 from the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. A ginger plant relative– *Globba sherwoodiana* – has been named in her honour; a painting of it, presented to her by the National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian Institution for her services, now hangs within view of her office desk in Chelsea.

The gallery in Kew still gives just as much joy. Shirley will always check the latest guest book comments. One visitor loved a painting so much she wrote: 'I may get it as a tattoo.' □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Modern Masterpieces of Botanical Art – The Shirley Sherwood Collection, opens at the Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, on 16 November 2019.

The Shirley Sherwood Collection – Modern Masterpieces of Botanical Art is published on 31 October by Kew Publishing, priced £35.



***Chrysanthemum* 'Bronze Elegance'**
A sport of the pink *C.* 'Mei-Kyo' whose complex, bronze pompoms, a couple of centimetres across, smother well-branched and sturdy plants. 80cm. AGM*. RHS H4†.

Hardy chrysanthemums

Late-flowering chrysanthemums are hardy plants with flowering stamina. Eschew gaudier colours and upright blooms to grow rusty coppers, bronzes and fiery reds

WORDS JONNY BRUCE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

For the past three years I have been part of the small team at the organic plant nursery, De Hessenhof, in the Netherlands. Walking on to its stock beds in October and early November, I'm still struck by the beacons of yellow, pink, orange, white and red that glow among frost-blackened foliage and brown skeletons. These hardy chrysanthemums are one of the specialities of De Hessenhof, which was started almost 40 years ago by Hans Kramer and his wife Miranda. While hardy chrysanthemums have suffered from the persistent myth of being fussy and tender perennials, in the past 20 years or so, they have been re-established as a mainstay of the autumn garden.

Hardy chrysanthemums probably reached peak popularity in the UK before the Second World War, largely down to the work of master nurseryman, Amos Perry. At his Hardy Plant Farm in Middlesex, Perry developed many celebrated cultivars in the inter-war years, some of which are still in cultivation. In 1933 a plant with a compact habit and soft-pink flowers had appeared at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Tentatively named *C. erubescens*, it was later described in 1938 by Kew botanist Joseph Robert Sealy as *C.* x *rubellum* (but this is now recognised as belonging to *C. zawadskii*). Perry got his green-fingered hands on this plant and immediately incorporated it into his breeding programme. The first introduction from this new bloodline was *C.* 'Clara Curtis', the first of what became known as the Rubellums. Considered one of the best plants for late summer, 'Clara Curtis' is reliably smothered with soft-pink blooms, each with a cheery yellow eye, from August until October, and still features in the catalogue at De Hessenhof.

In the early 20th century, improvements using forms of *C. zawadskii* were also taking place in the USA at the Bristol Nursery of Alexander Cummings in Connecticut. JG Jack of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston had introduced a plant from Korea under the name of *C. coreanum* (now recognised as *C. zawadskii* subsp. *coreanum*). By 1928 Cummings was using seeds from this plant to develop his famous Koreans, which introduced American gardeners to a whole new range of colours and flower shapes. Many nurseries still divide hardy chrysanthemums between Koreans and Rubellums but the reality is there has been so much breeding between the two groups that they have become indivisible. It is easier to divide hardy chrysanthemums between the compact, early forms that flower from June to September and the later and taller cultivars that tend to last into November.

Unfortunately, in the 1940s, many old garden cultivars were lost, as ornamental plants made way for vegetables to help the war effort. The post-war years saw a revival of the show blooms, mostly variations of the tender and definitely fussy *C. indicum*, which fostered misconceptions about this diverse group of plants. The development of mass-produced all-year-round chrysanthemums, synonymous with forlorn petrol station forecourts offerings, has done little to promote the garden-worthiness of the genus.

Modern breeding techniques tend to focus on compactness and bright colours over longevity and many new cultivars struggle to live up to the garden-worthiness of their older counterparts, but that is beginning to change. No gardener has done more to restore the popularity of hardy chrysanthemums as National Collection holder, Judy Barker. It was Judy who, in collaboration with the late chrysanthemum expert, Barrie Machin, helped co-ordinate – and provide plants for – the RHS trial at Wisley in 2010-2012. Despite harsh weather during the trial – December 2010 saw temperatures plunge to -17°C, while March 2011 was the hottest since 1659 – most of the 130 entries flowered well with 20 cultivars being awarded an Award of Garden Merit.

Hardy chrysanthemums in the collection at De Hessenhof have proved themselves over many years and, although the RHS has given most a hardiness rating of H4, meaning they are hardy to temperatures of around -5°C to -10°C, the average for a UK winter, many have survived Dutch winters down to -20°C. The colours range from whites and soft pinks to rusty orange and fiery reds, and all look good when set against a palette of autumnal browns. Some cultivars will benefit from having their buds pinched out in early June, the result being more branching and less staking.

Most are well suited to a sunny border and are adaptable to a range of soils – although they prefer not to sit wet during the winter and resent drying out in the summer. A good feed of organic fertiliser in spring and a mulch layer to retain moisture will set them up for the rest of the year. The pleasing mass of silvery foliage is an excellent foil for other plants earlier in the year and as the frosts begin to nip there are few flowers for which a gardener can feel so grateful. □

Turn the page for more hardy chrysanthemums ▷

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. ¹Hardiness ratings given where available.

WARM TONES

1 *Chrysanthemum* 'Brennpunkt'
A glorious, almost dahlia-like bloom of blood red. A vigorous plant with fully double flowers that remain somewhat exposed in the centre. Its cultivar name translates as 'focal point' and, with its tall yet sturdy stems, that is something it certainly provides among the browns of autumn. 80cm.

2 *Chrysanthemum* 'Coup de Soleil'
A wonderful and long-lived selection from French nurseryman Thierry Delabroye. Large, half-double flowers of bronzy orange, fading to a warm yellow at the base and tip of each petal appear in September and last until November. 70cm.

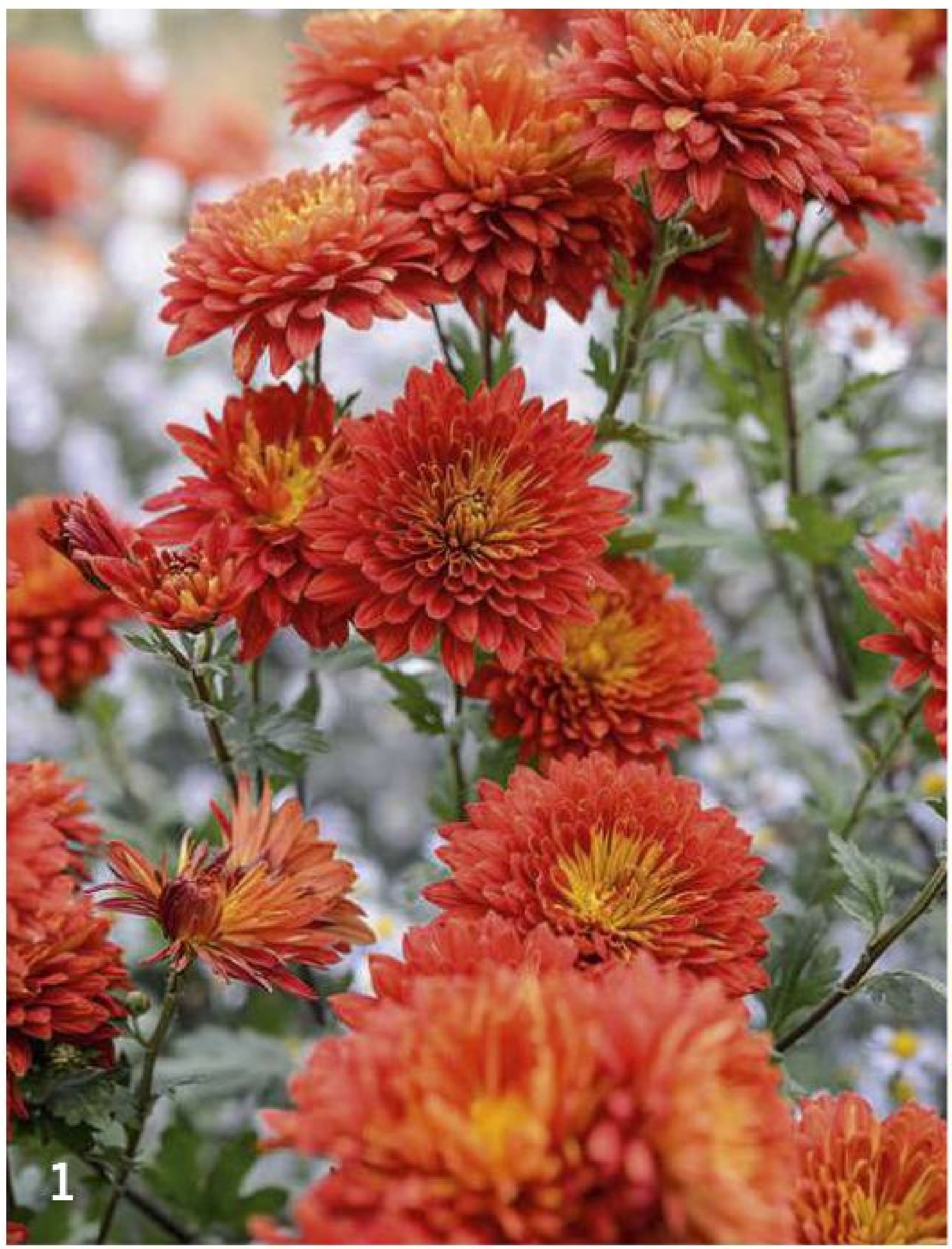
3 *Chrysanthemum* 'Bienchen'
Introduced in 1974, its name translates as 'little bee', which perfectly describes the golden yellow pompoms marked with a reddish brown heart in September. This cultivar performed well in German perennial trials with its compact and very branching habit. 70cm.

4 *Chrysanthemum* 'Dernier Soleil'
An old French cultivar that came to De Hessenhof via a Belgian plant fair. The soft apricot-orange petals fading to a warm yellow heart are deserving of its name. This extremely long-flowering cultivar can produce blooms as early as the beginning of August and will continue to the frosts. 80cm.

5 *Chrysanthemum* 'Dixter Orange'
Fergus Garrett, head gardener of Great Dixter, brought this cultivar to De Hessenhof as a gift. Much admired for its persistent double blooms of glorious, rusty orange produced on tall stems. A very traditional garden chrysanthemum that has survived the hardest of winters. 80cm.

6 *Chrysanthemum* 'Rumpelstilzchen'
A strong, double red with smallish flowers about 4cm across. These are held on sturdy stems and were well received at the German perennial trials. This cardinal red makes a big impact among blue asters and the browns of the fading blooms of ornamental grasses. September to October. 70cm.

7 *Chrysanthemum* 'Granatapfel'
A relatively new release from Eugen Schleipfer in 2015, with nearly spherical, double flowers of intense red edged with golden yellow. The name means pomegranate and each petal ends in a distinctive point. Reportedly extremely hardy but yet to be tested at De Hessenhof. 60cm.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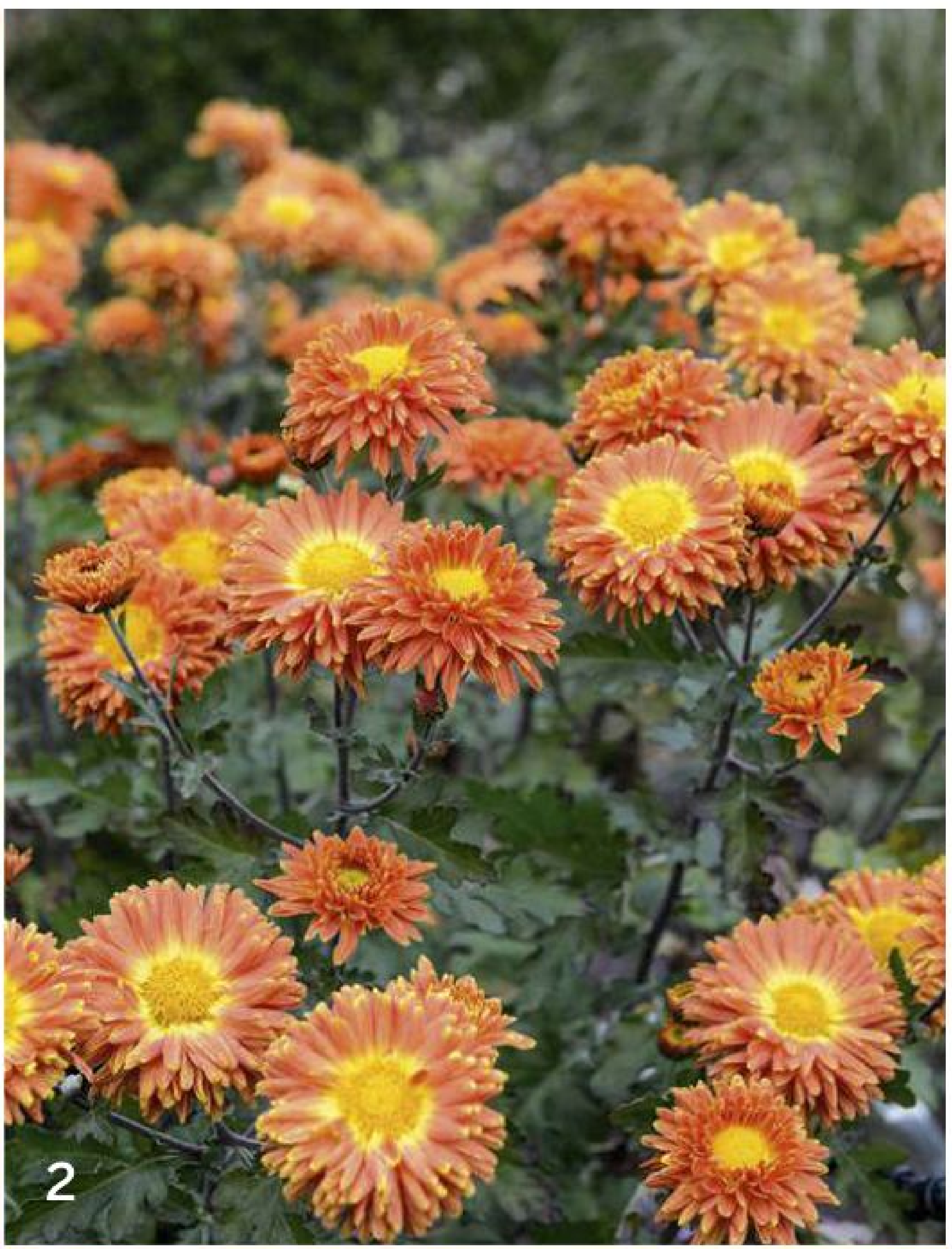
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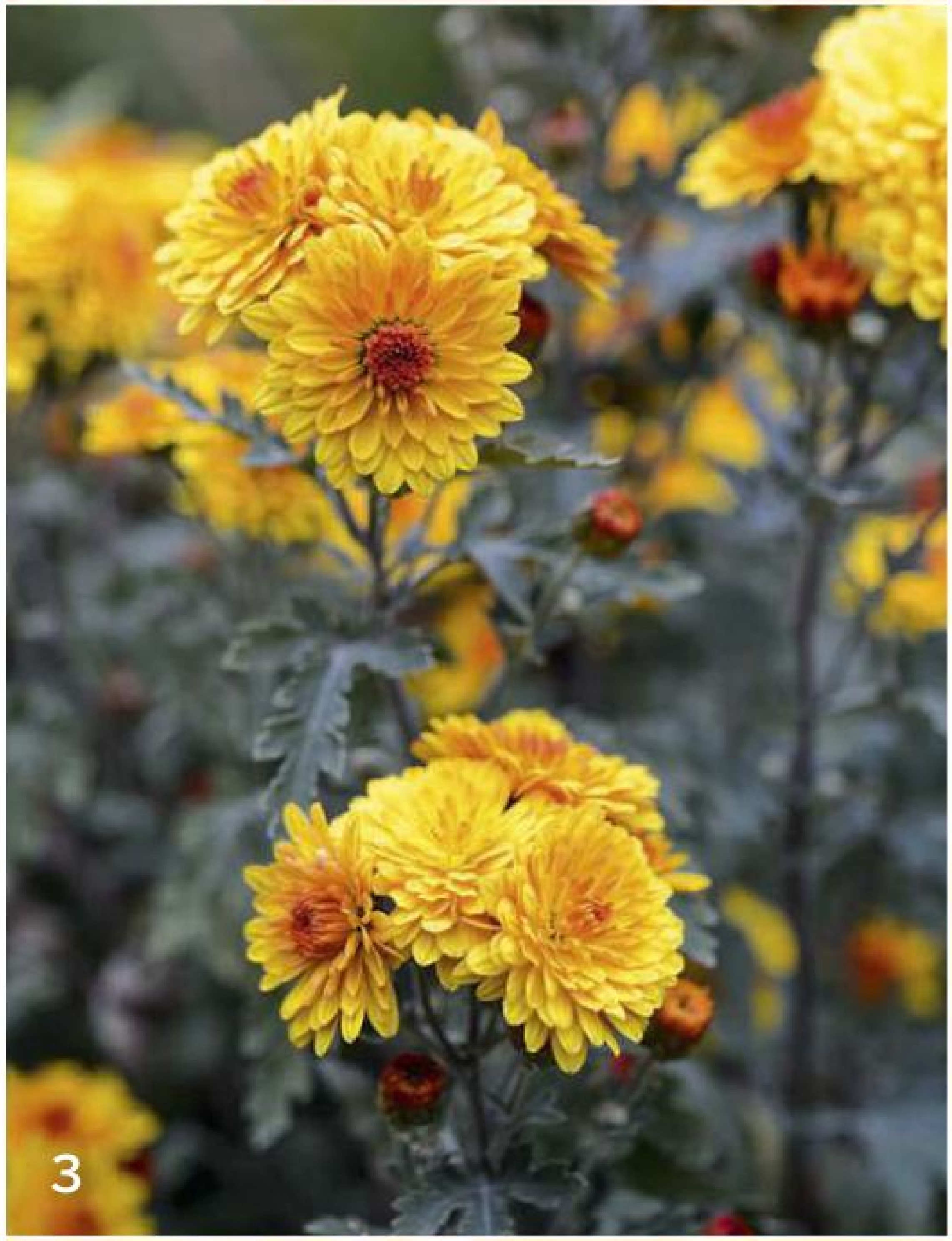
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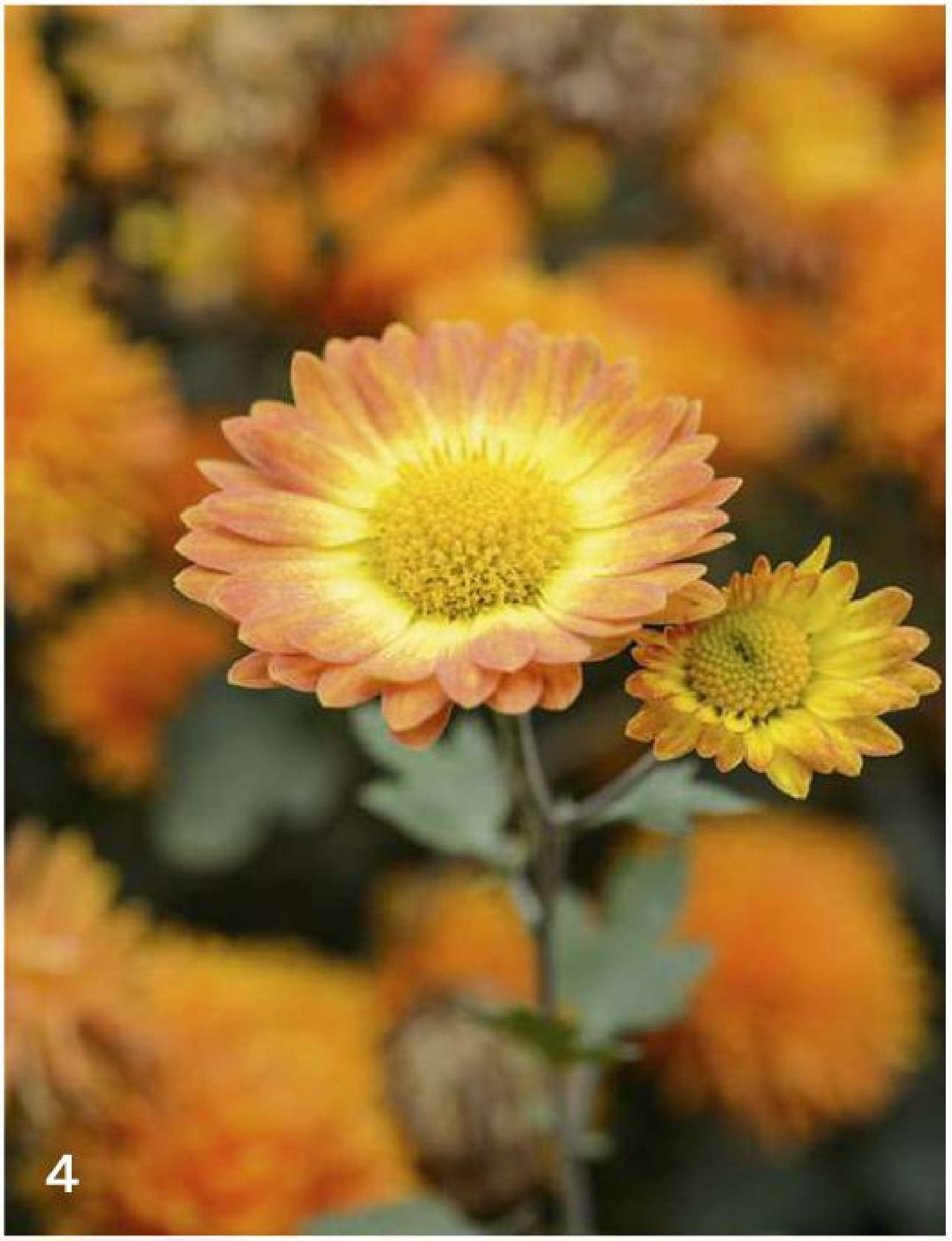
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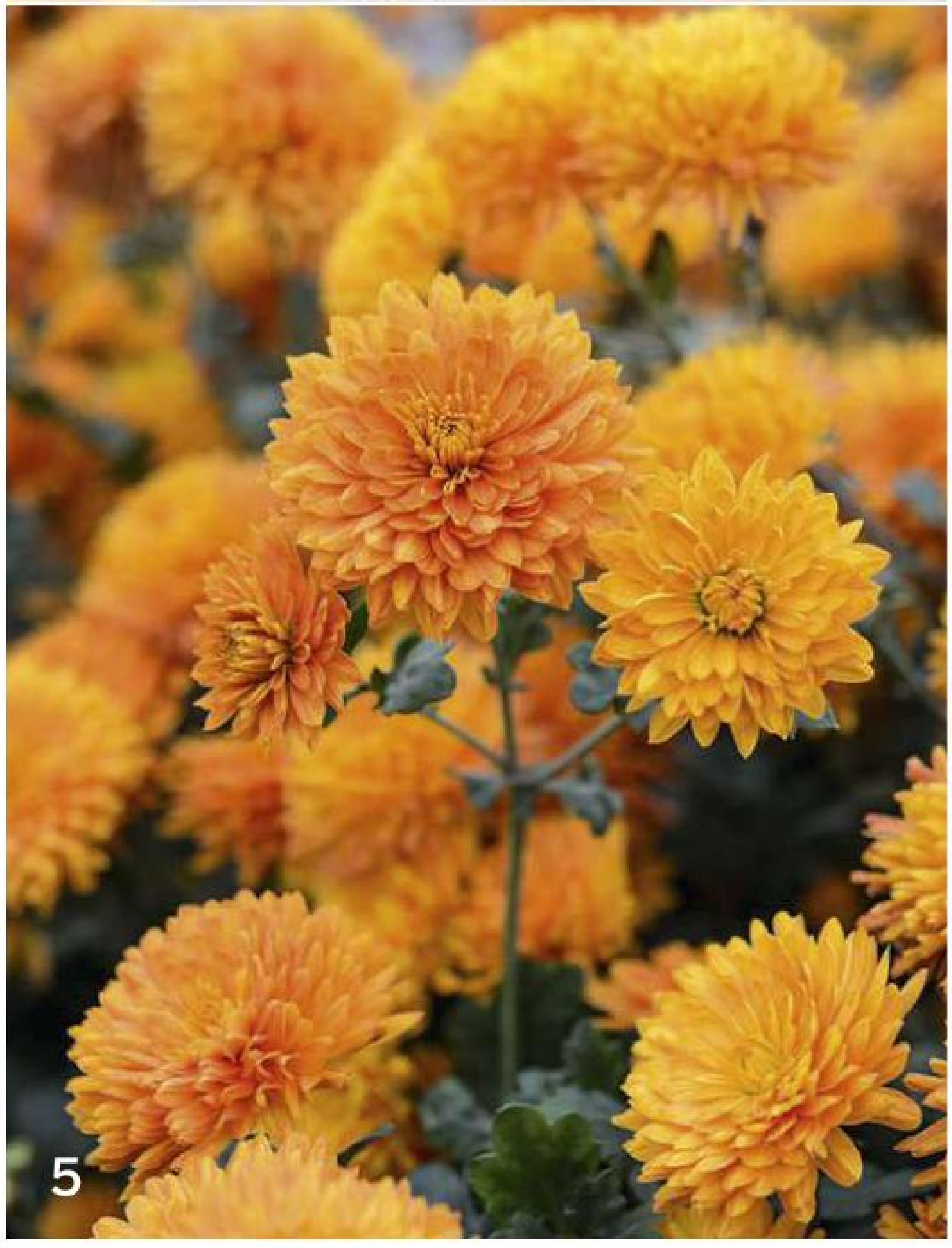
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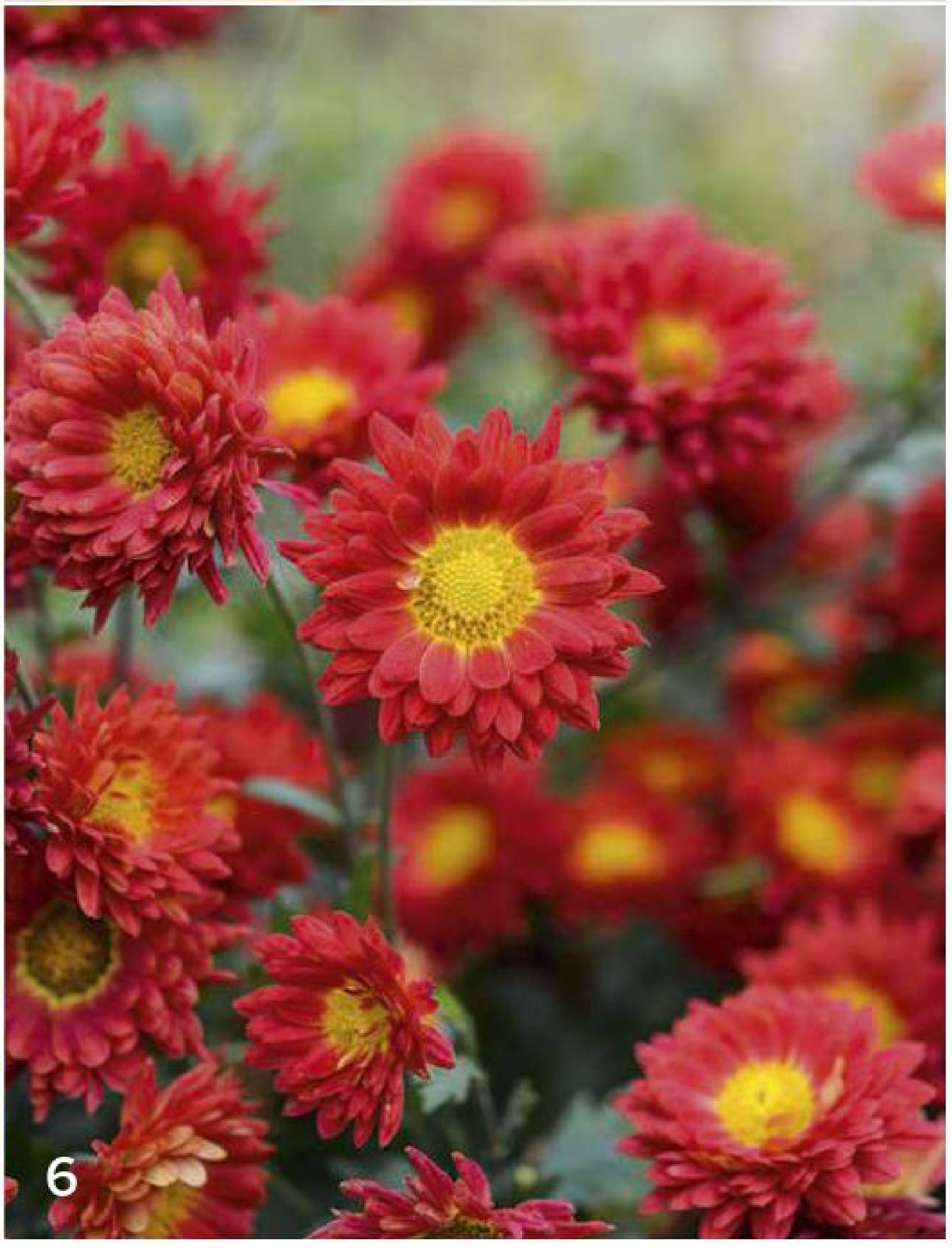
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COOL TONES

8 *Chrysanthemum* 'Poesie'
Discovered high in Romania's Carpathian Mountains by nurseryman Wolfgang Kautz, this creamy-white, cultivar has helped reignite interest in hardy chrysanthemums. 60cm.

9 *Chrysanthemum* 'Clara Curtis'
Amos Perry's original Rubellum. A classic single pink with a delicate yellow eye which produces masses of blooms in September to cover distinctive, fern-like, grey foliage. 70cm.

10 *Chrysanthemum* 'Jolie Rose'
Another good pink but with semi-double blooms and a white halo in the centre. A sturdy perennial with tidy green foliage, which holds on to its flowers late in November. 60-70cm.

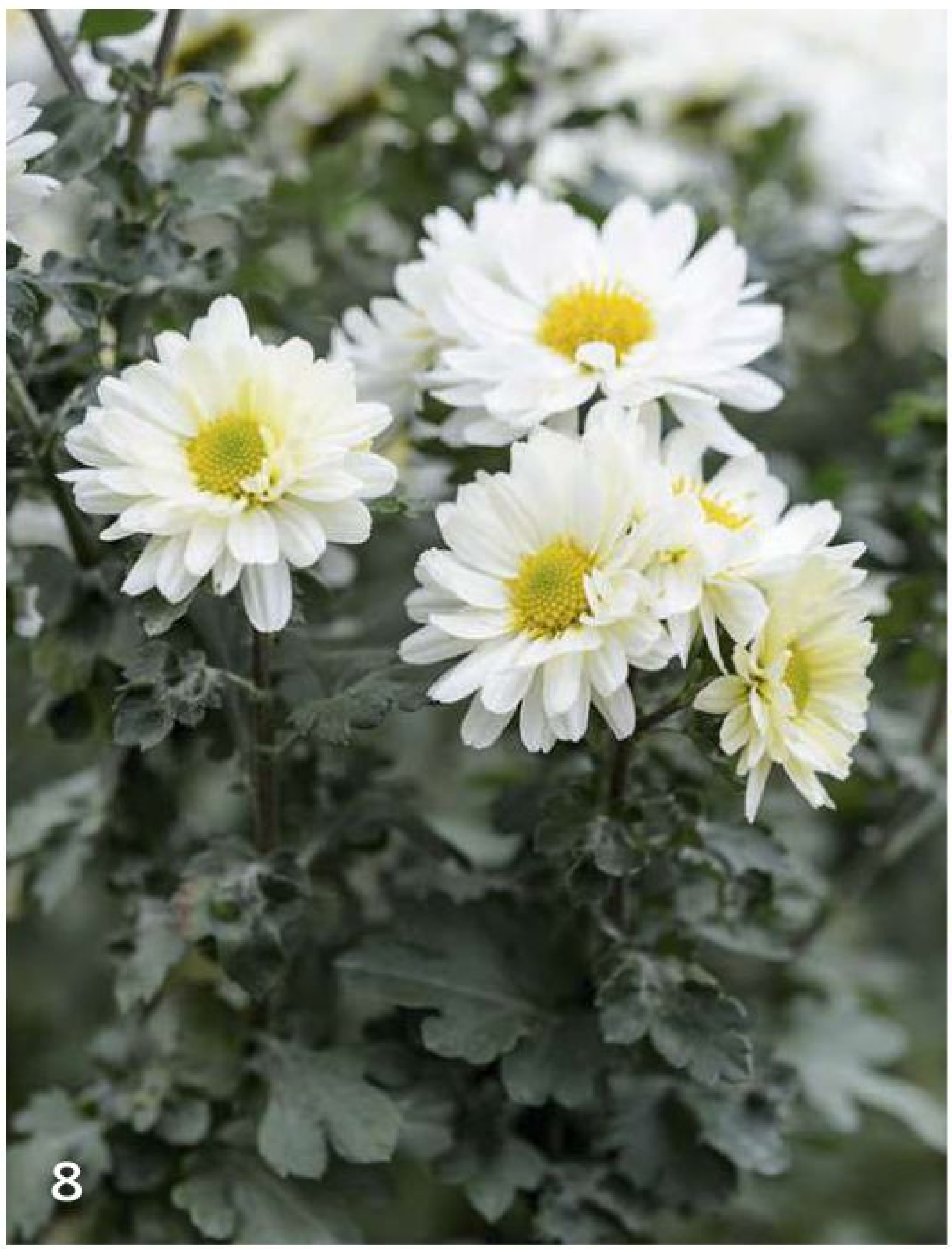
11 *Chrysanthemum* 'Herbstkuss'
A fantastic single with deep petals. Compact but benefits from pinching out in June to provide an even denser display from October to November. 40-60cm.

12 *Chrysanthemum* 'La Damoiselle'
An unusual pale pink for so late in the year it produces large flowers on a branching, compact plant. October to November. 60cm. RHS H4.

13 *Chrysanthemum* 'Ruth Treff'
A bright-yellow single – sometimes producing a double row of petals – introduced by Christian Kress at Sarastro Nursery and named for the woman who sent him the plant from Darmstadt in Germany. Low growing with masses of relatively early flowers. Does well in part shade. August to October. 40-60cm.

WHERE TO BUY

- **Cotswold Garden Flowers** Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7EZ. Tel 01386 833849, cgf.net
- **Daisy Roots** Jenningsbury, London Road, Hertford SG13 7NS.Tel 07958 563355, daisyroots.com
- **Halls of Heddon** West Heddon Nursery, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 0JS. Tel 01661 852445, hallsofheddon.com
- **Kwekerij De Hessenhof** Hessenweg 41, 6718 TC Ede, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)318 617 334, hessenhof.nl
- **Norwell Nurseries** 5 Marstons Cottages Woodhouse Road, Newark on Trent, Nottinghamshire NG23 6JX. Tel 01636 636337, norwellnurseries.co.uk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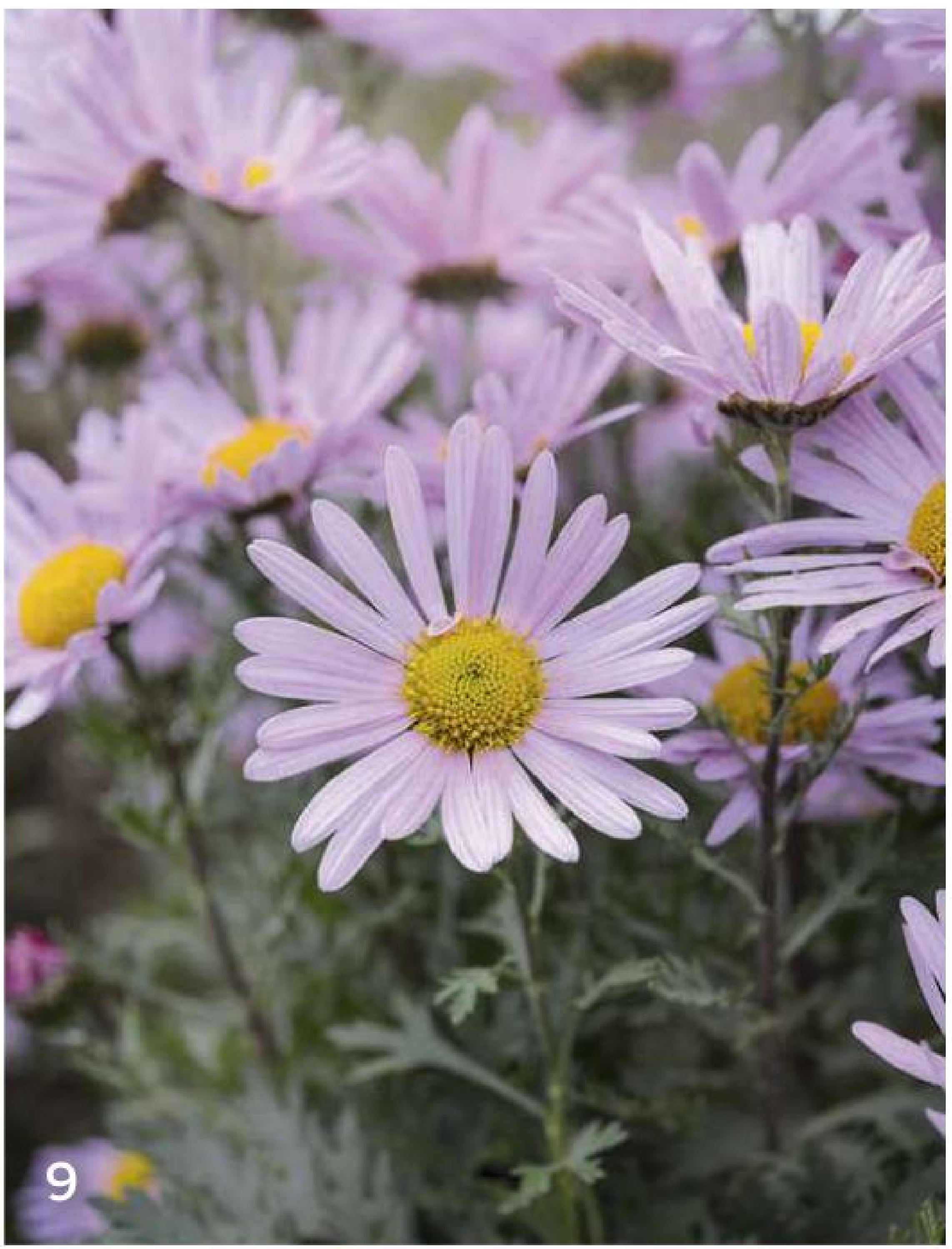
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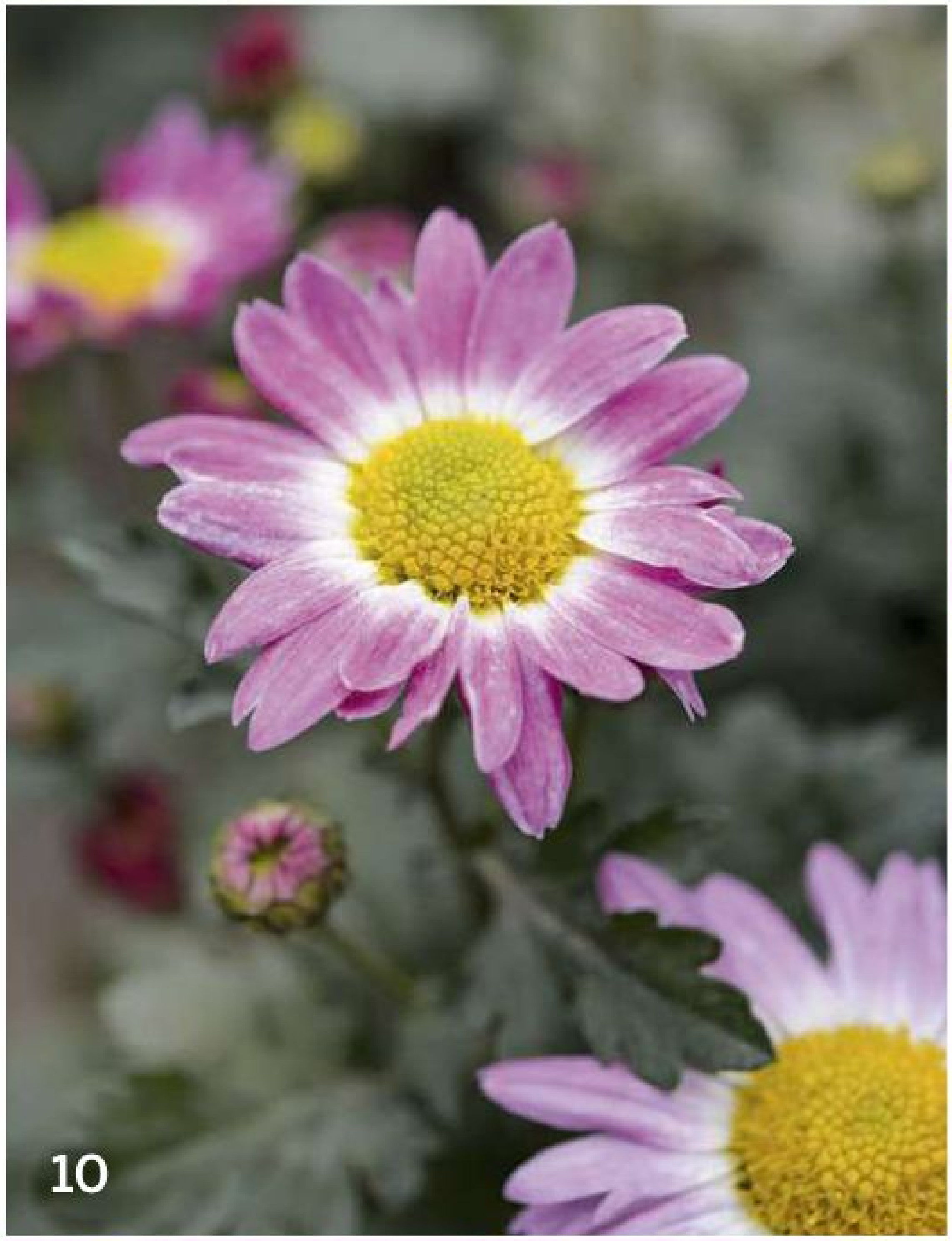
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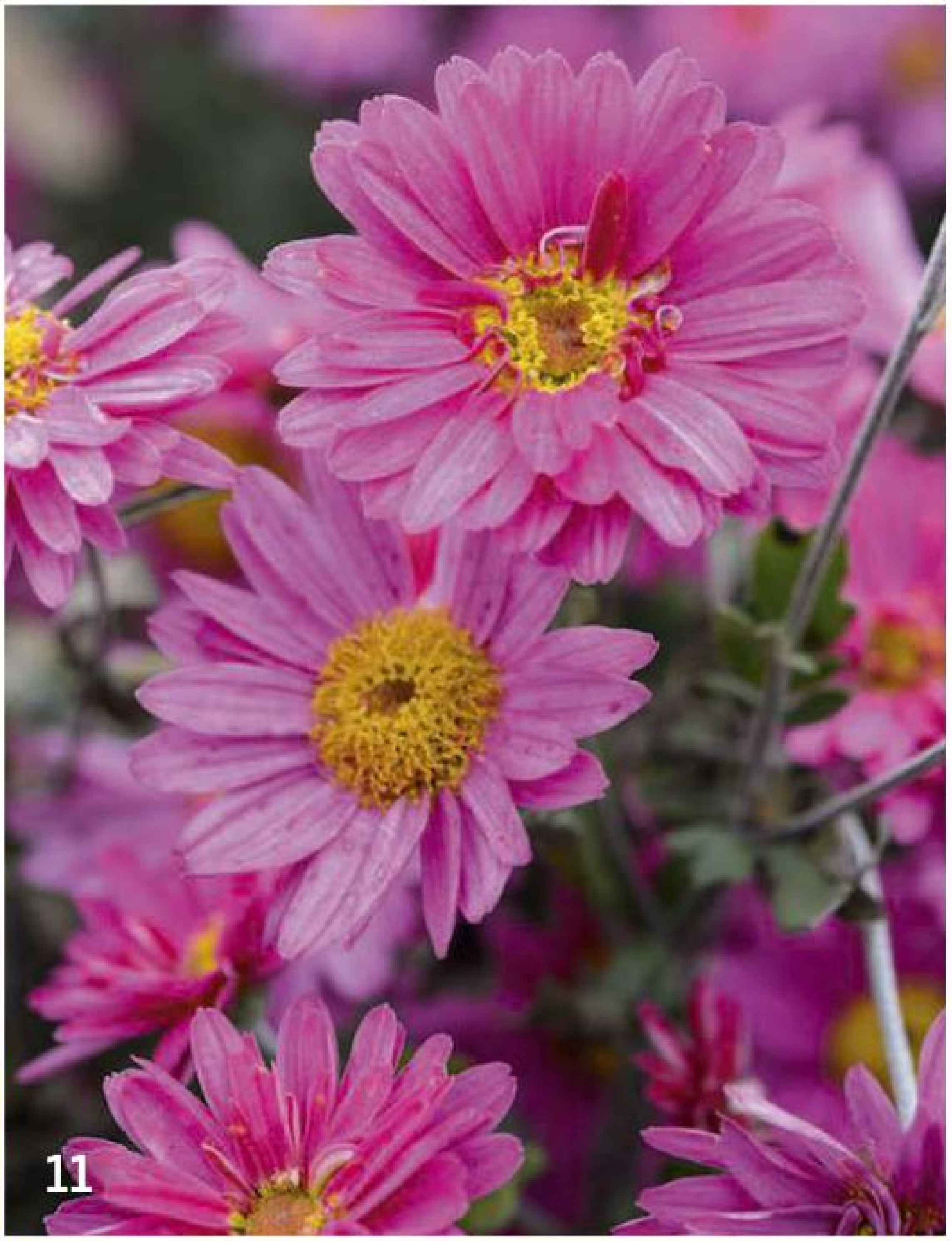
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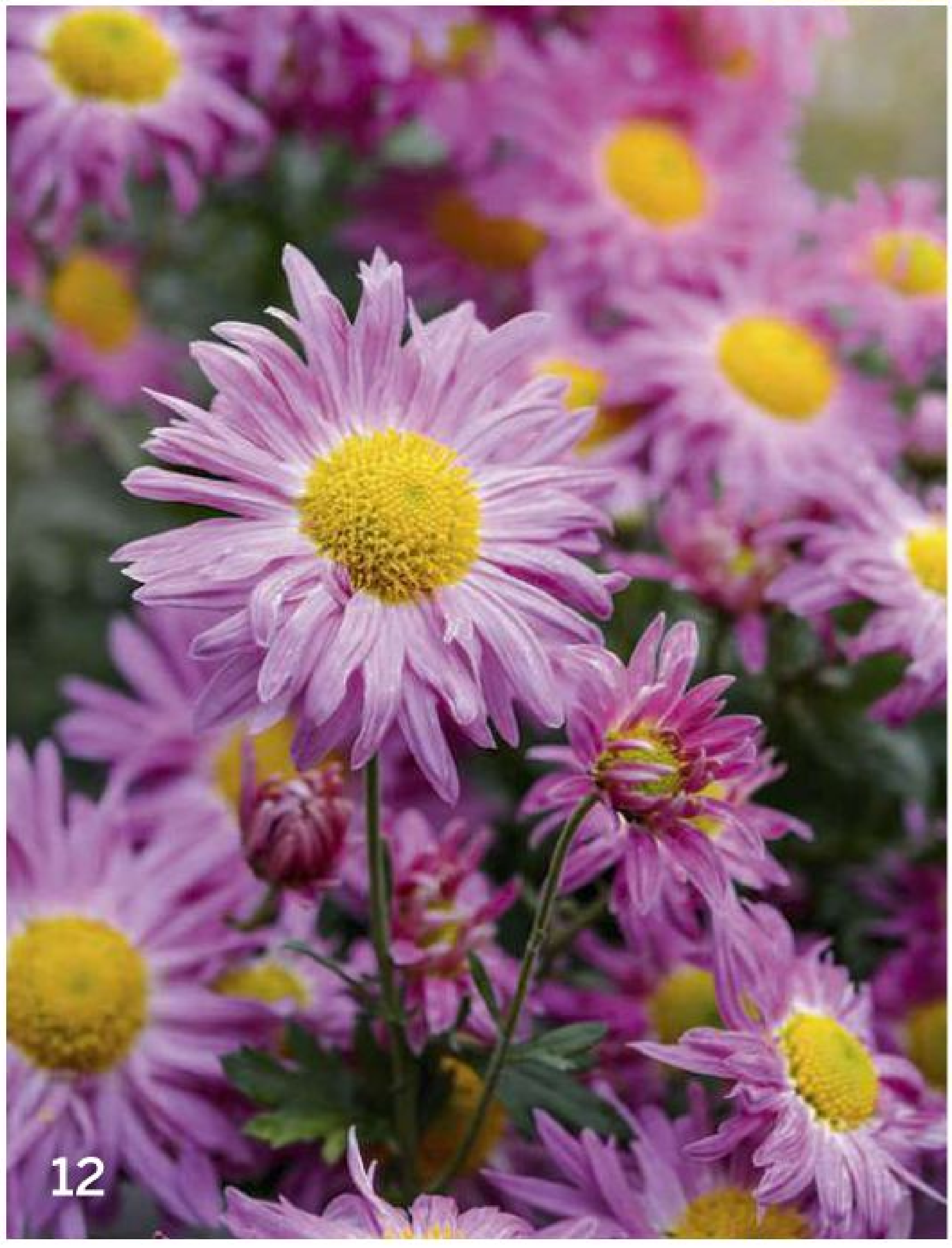
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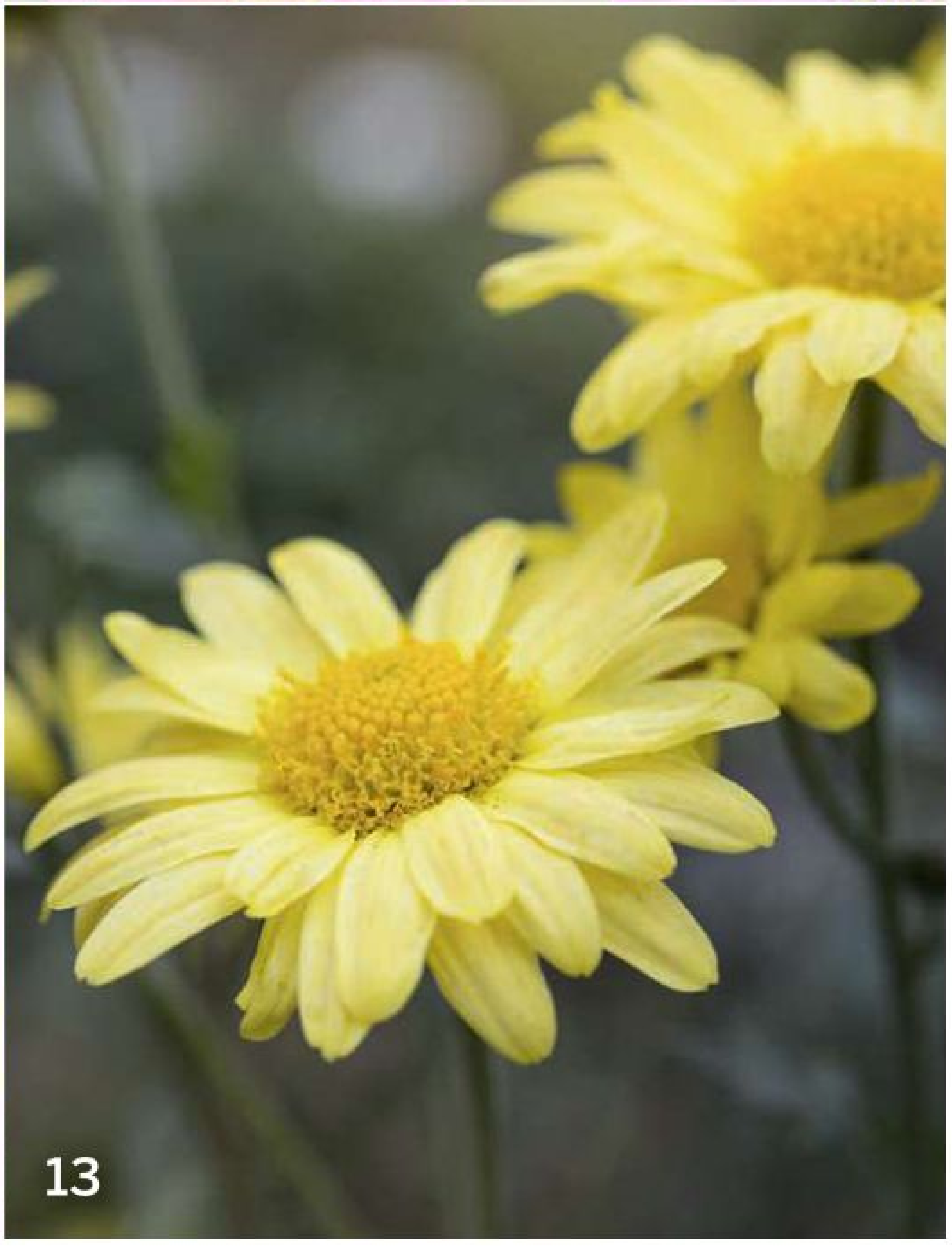
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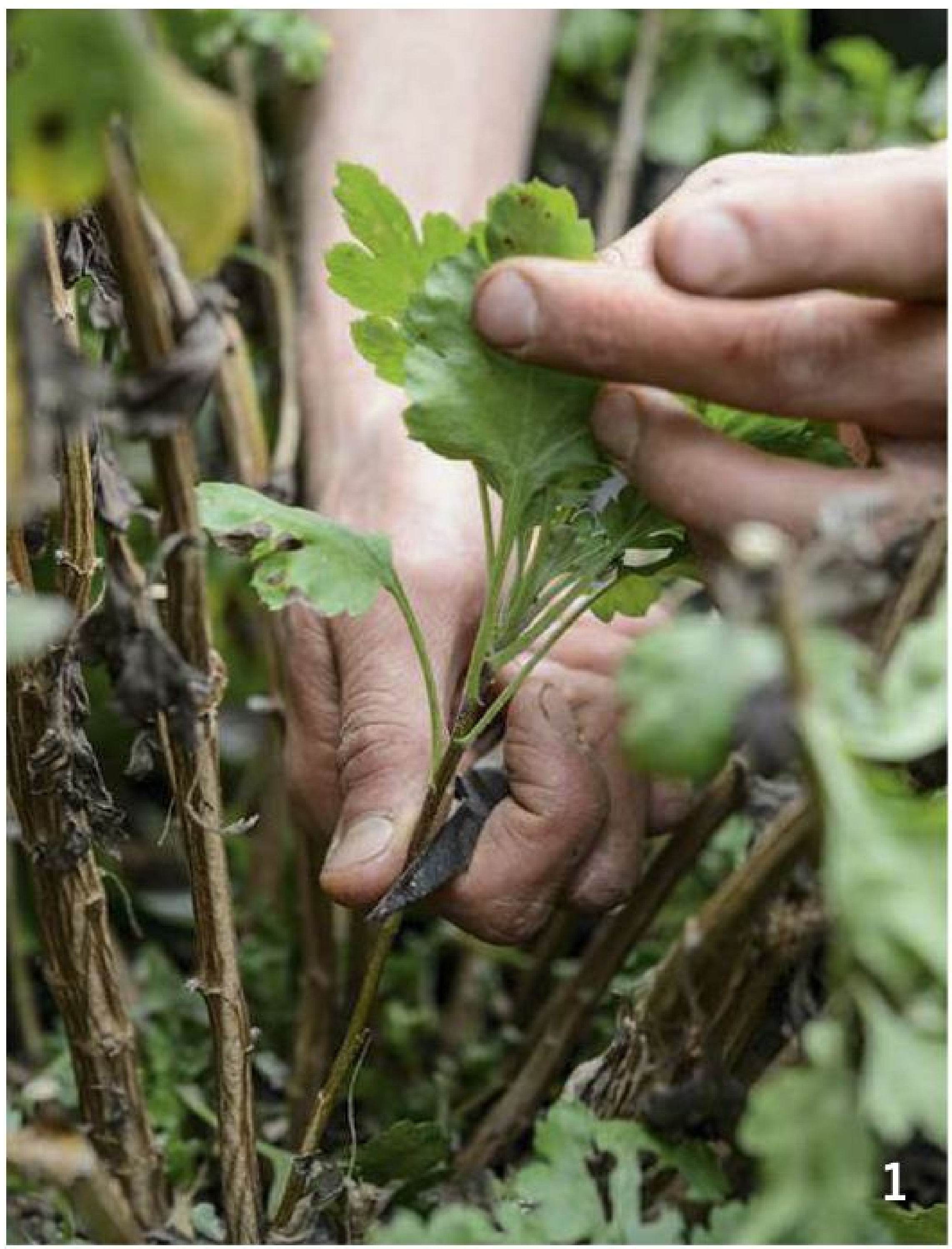
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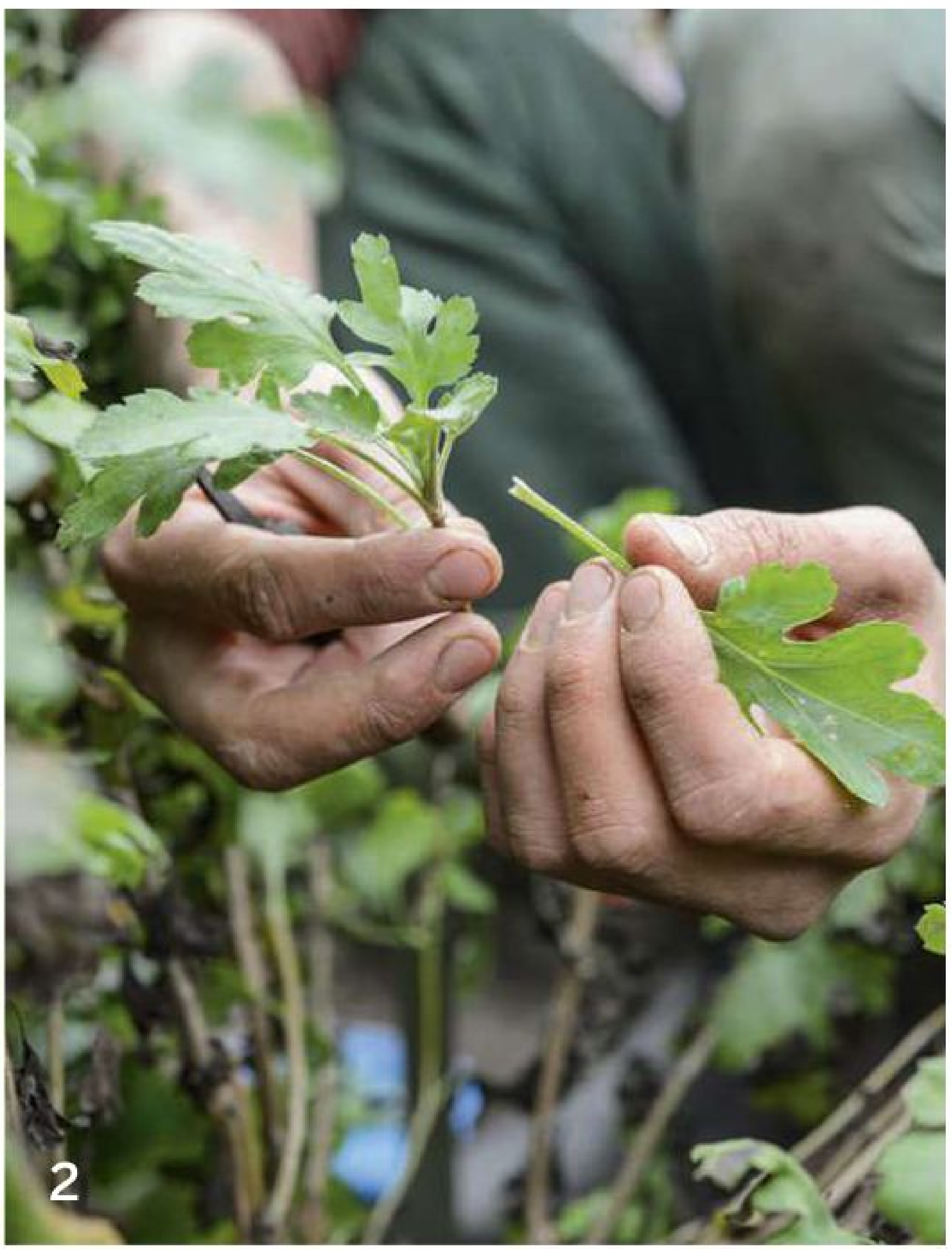
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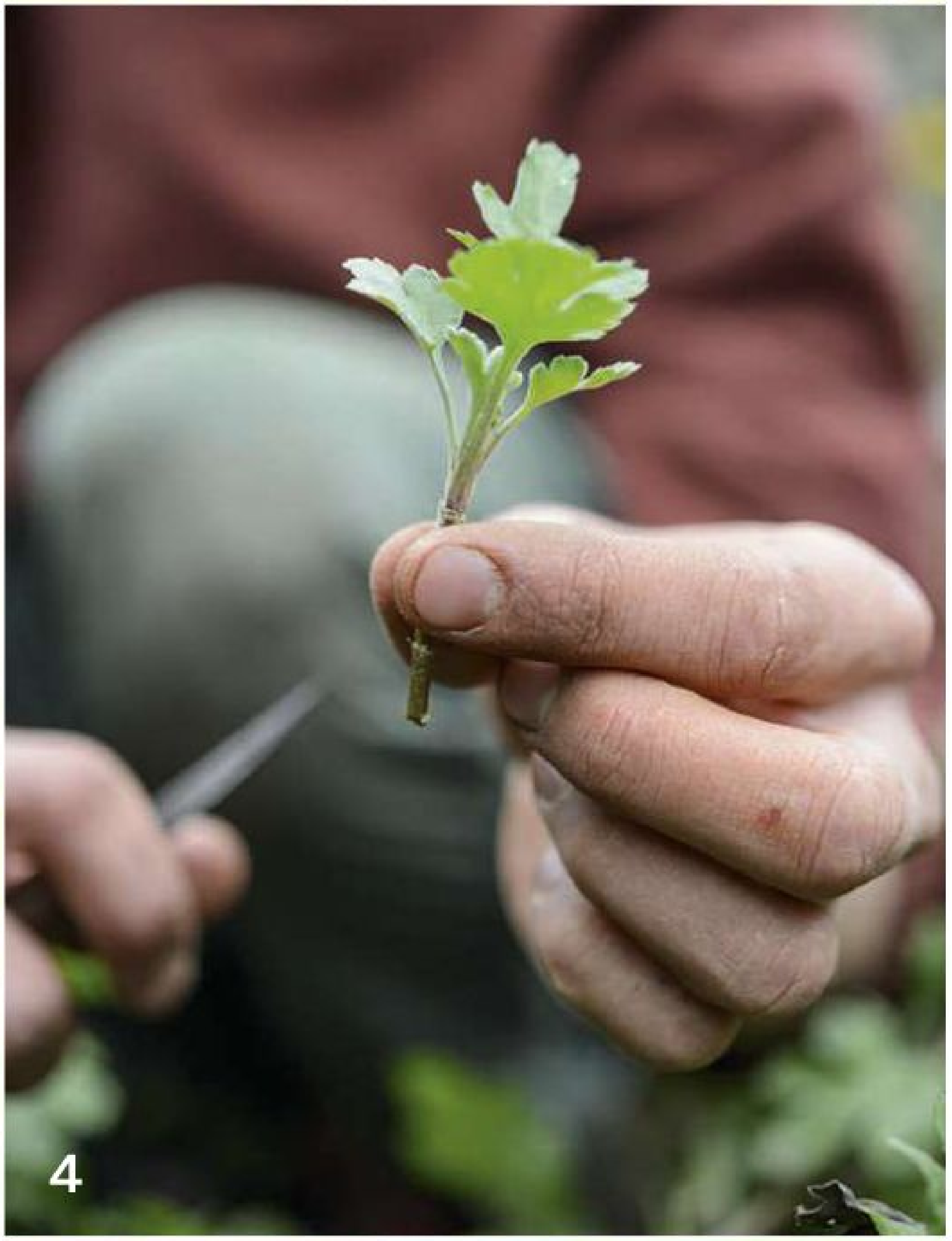
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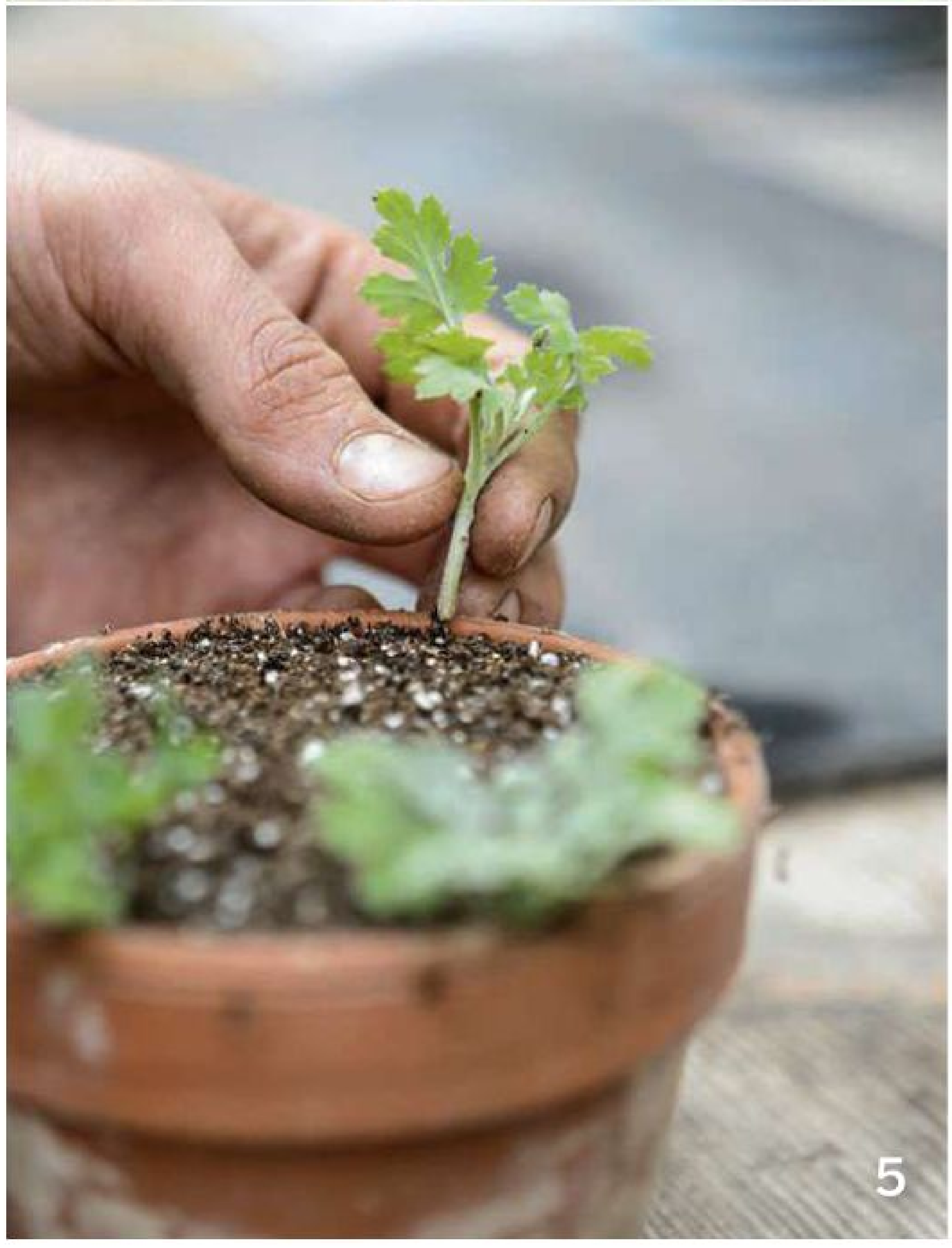
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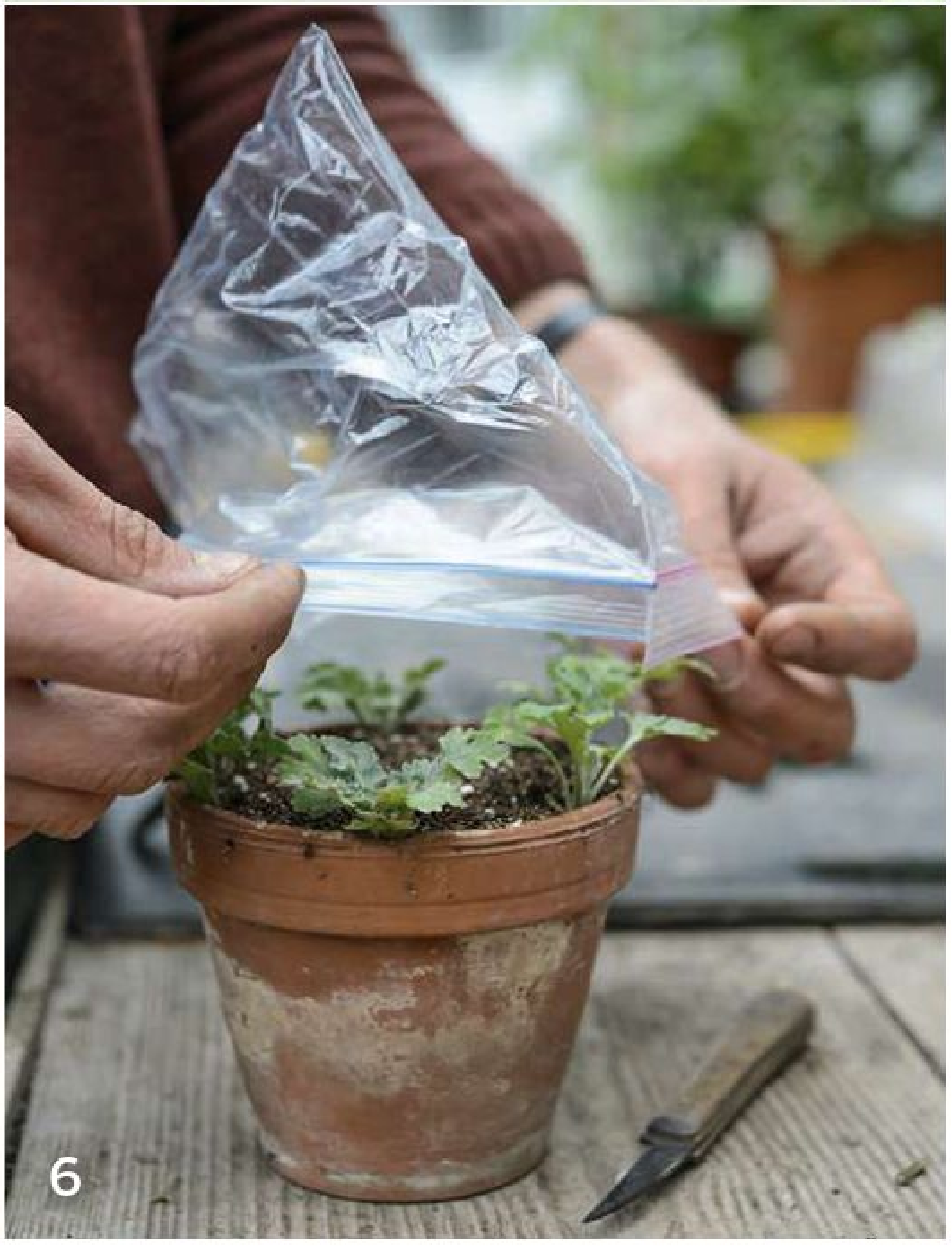
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MANY THANKS TO KWEKERIJ DE HESSENHOF IN THE NETHERLANDS WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN

PROPAGATION

Like many garden perennials, hardy chrysanthemums benefit from being divided every few years. This is best done in late spring and helps to reduce overcrowding, reinvigorating the plant and providing you with a few extra plants. However, an equally easy propagation method, and one that produces far more plants, is by cuttings. Cuttings can be taken in the late spring and early summer, and are best taken in the morning before the heat of the day and when the shoots are turgid.

1 Using a clean and sharp knife select a shoot that is around 5cm long. Here it's been taken from the base, but you can also take one from, higher on the plant. These cutting should be taken from typical, healthy growth and should be placed in water to prevent them from drying out.
2 Immediately remove the lower leaves to reduce transpiration (the evaporation of water from plant leaves).
3 Once the cuttings have been safely brought into the potting shed or glasshouse they can be neatened up and stems shortened.
4 Ensure the stem cutting is clean with no ragged edges or tears, which may risk rot entering and any larger remaining leaves can be cut in half to further reduce transpriation.
5 Trimmed cuttings should be inserted around the edge of a terracotta pot filled with a free-draining cutting compost. The terracotta is breathable and allows for more oxygen to reach the active site of rooting.
6 A plastic bag is an effective and inexpensive way to maintain humidity. Once the cuttings have been well watered – using a fine rose, so as to not disturb the cuttings – place the bag over the pot. It is important that the leaves do not touch the inside of the bag as condensation will increase the risk of rot and grey mould.

Chefs' specials

In the second of our series on growing for flavour, we visit a working kitchen garden in Scotland where head grower Jo Campbell works to Michelin-starred standards

WORDS **ALYS HURN** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

Although protected from the worst of the Scottish weather, the soil in the garden can take a while to warm up, so Jo sows and plants up most of her crops in a greenhouse to give them a head start.

Jo has been working for chefs for 15 years and her knowledge of the pure flavour of vegetables is second to none

From a 12-acre plot outside Perth, Jo Campbell muses on the vagaries of the Scottish climate. “I’m not sure I’d want to grow here if I wasn’t in a walled garden,” she says. Jo is head grower of the garden that supplies Restaurant Andrew Fairlie on the Gleneagles Estate. The restaurant was opened in 2001 by the late chef Andrew Fairlie and in 2006 became the only establishment in Scotland to be awarded two Michelin stars.

Size is incredibly important to Jo. The ‘Tokyo Cross’ turnips she grows are picked when they are size of a ping-pong ball; the chefs scoop out the middle and fill them with salted butter. A box of vibrant-pink stems turn out to be beetroot cress, which when nibbled releases a burst of sweet, earthy flavour. Cabbages are also harvested earlier than expected, and carrots and parsnips are kept small to harness their tender taste. Jo and the chefs sample the vegetables at different stages from shoot to full size to understand how the flavour changes through the year.

Jo applies to the garden the same meticulous, Michelin-star detail expected in the kitchen. October is the start of her season. She records the progress and volume of every crop, noting when it was sown, planted out and harvested. This information helps her to use every inch of space. “I can calculate, within one or two weeks, when a crop will finish, and I’ll have my next crop ready to go in,” she says. “It means I can get the most out of the season rather than not knowing what to grow in the space next.” To extend the season further, Jo has been growing crops specifically for pickling, preserving and fermenting, such as ‘Caraflex’ cabbage, which makes excellent sauerkraut.

Having choice and diversity of produce on the doorstep has boosted creativity. The chefs have the chance to experiment with fresh, seasonal flavours and they try to use every part of the vegetable; dried nasturtium flowers, for example, are used as seasoning and the leaves are used to flavour butter. And by working closely with the kitchen, Jo can take pleasure from seeing her hard work come to fruition. “The chefs can turn the produce into a dish that is like art on a plate,” she says. “I can’t do that, but I get to see what I grow from start to finish.” □

Please turn over for Jo’s choice of 18 key herbs and vegetables to grow for flavour ▷

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18 KEY PLANTS

1 *Brassica oleracea* 'Nagoya Red' (ornamental kale) These colourful rosettes are more common in floral displays than in the kitchen garden, but careful harvesting from the centre of the plant provides tender leaves with a delicate flavour. The Nagoya series comes in a mix of fuchsia-pink and creamy-white shades that retain their colour when steamed and add a mellow flavour to autumnal game dishes. Sow in June for an autumn harvest. Plant through black matting to prevent soil splash on the leaves. 30cm. UDSA 7a-11[†].

2 *Tagetes lucida* (Mexican tarragon) Produces a mass of small, golden-yellow blossoms and has a warm, peppery, anise-liquorice flavour that combines well with savoury dishes of veal, fish and eggs. Stronger in flavour than French tarragon, it keeps this robust flavour during cooking. Grow as an annual and cover the seed with vermiculite to help germination. Deadhead regularly for a continuous supply of fresh flowers. 90cm. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11b.

3 *Raphanus sativus* 'Longipinnatus' (red meat or watermelon radish) A robust radish with firm, crisp flesh and a light, peppery flavour. Eat raw, finely sliced on a mandolin, to appreciate its vibrant-pink colour. Also ideal for pickling, fermenting and cooking as a vegetable. Sown from July onwards, it takes eight weeks to grow and can be harvested from golf-ball to tennis-ball size. Slugs can be a challenging pest. 60cm.

4 *Rumex scutatus* (buckler-leaf sorrel) The shield-shaped leaves of this perennial herb have a sharp-sour, citrus taste, similar to Bramley apple skin. Use sparingly; the acidity of just a single leaf will cut through fatty meats and complement fish perfectly. Ideally, rotate on two patches and harvest from spring through to autumn, cutting back regularly to encourage new growth. Propagate by division. 20cm.

5 *Brassica oleracea* 'Emerald Ice' (Emerald Ice kale) A cool-season brassica with a milder flavour and softer leaf than other kales. As plants mature, the green, ruffled leaves develop a pretty white centre that is still visible when steamed or blanched in salted water. A compact plant good for small vegetable gardens. Crop the lower, outer leaves first and allow a harvesting period of several months. 60cm.

6 *Brassica rapa* 'Tokyo Cross' (Tokyo Cross turnip) A pure-white hybrid with a delicate flavour and crisp, juicy crunch. Can be eaten raw as a snack or cooked and served as a canapé with salted butter. Its clean, neutral flavour also lends itself well to a cooked garnish for fish, and the tops can be wilted for greens. It takes five weeks to grow from seed. Station sow successionally, in blocks or drills, for a continuous supply. 15cm.

7 *Oxalis spiralis* subsp. *vulcanicola* 'Burgundy' (velvet spiral sorrel) All oxalis contain oxalic acid, which gives its tangy, sour, sharp, refreshing flavour. Here 'Burgundy' with rich, wine-coloured leaves, is paired with *Oxalis obtusa* 'Sunset', which in autumn is a bright gold, and a green oxalis that has a much softer leaf texture than the other cultivars. A mix of cultivars adds a vibrant contrasting colour to a dish. Their acidity cuts through patés and terrines but also sits well with fish and adds a zingy surprise to salads. Grow 'Burgundy' and 'Sunset' as annuals and propagate from cuttings. Plants don't like to be waterlogged. 20-30cm.

8 *Brassica oleracea* 'Samantha' (pointed savoy cabbage) A change from the traditional large round savoy cabbages this cultivar produces a small, neat, compact, pointed head with a good savoury flavour but softer texture. Reveal the pale hearts by stripping away the coarser outer leaves, cut the heart in half to steam, butter and then char on a griddle to add colour and enhance flavours. Pair with any meat dish or with fennel, caraway and apples. Plant closely together through black matting to prevent weeds and hold moisture in the ground. Ready to harvest in autumn from a June/July sowing. 38cm.

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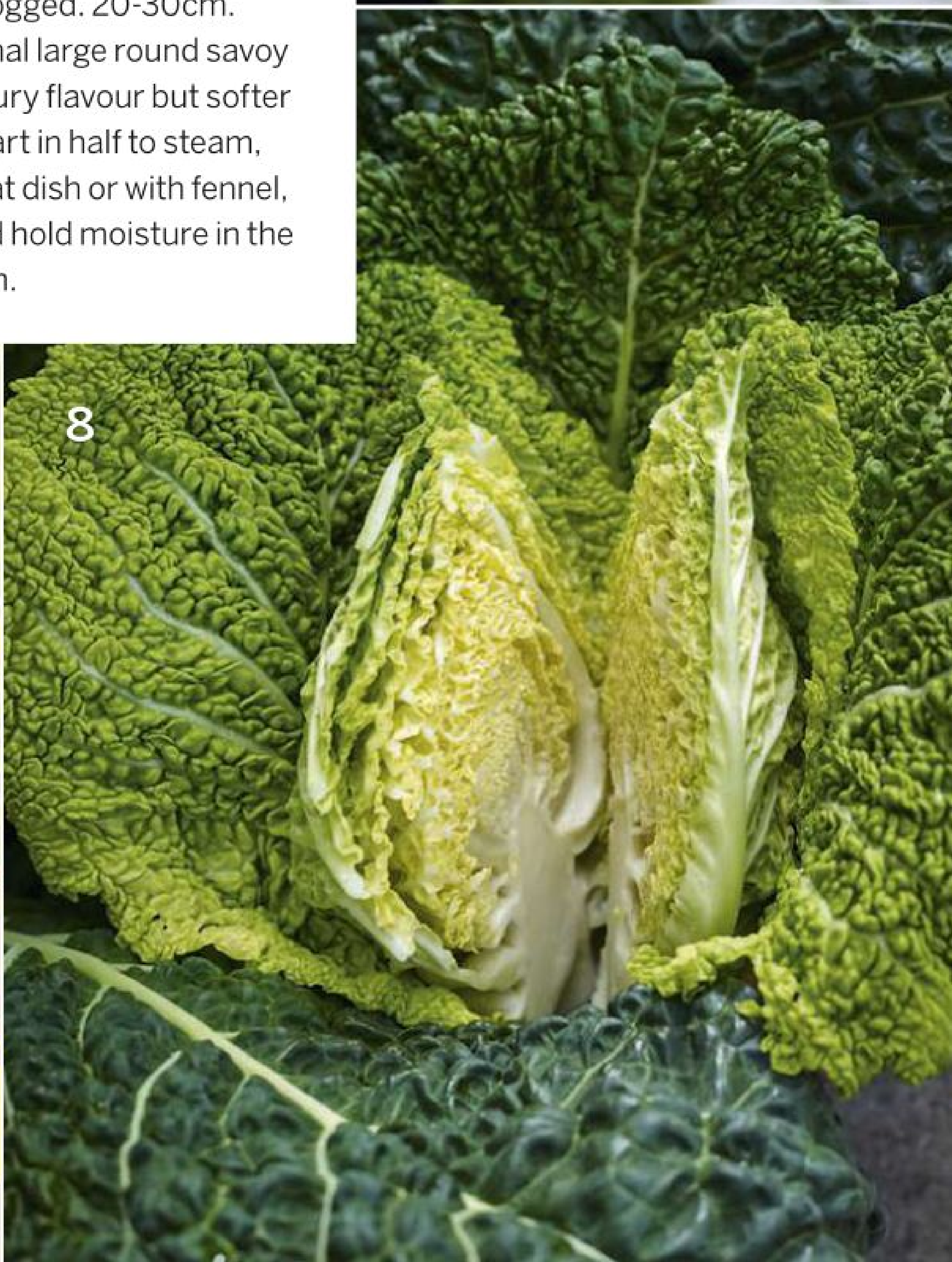
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Vegetables are sampled at different stages to understand how flavour changes with the seasons

9 *Beta vulgaris* 'Chioggia' (candy beetroot) and *Beta vulgaris* 'Golden' (golden beetroot) Candy beetroot with its magenta pink and white concentric circles is one of the sweetest cultivars with a mild earthiness. The golden variety has a more earthy flavour. Beetroot flavours intensify when cooked especially salt-baked whole, gently slipping off their skins and serving warm. 30cm.

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[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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18 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

10 *Stachys affinis* (Chinese artichokes or crosne) Small edible tubers, pearly white in colour with a juicy, crunchy texture. Blanch in boiling, salted water with a little added lemon juice to preserves their colour, then finish in a brown butter. Perfect with wild mushrooms, or dressed with olive oil in an autumnal salad of earthy beets, bitter chicory, walnuts and sorrel. Seed tubers are expensive to buy so keep some harvested crop back for stock and store in sand over winter for next year's spring planting. 60cm.

11 *Brassica oleracea* Capitata Group 'Gonzalez' (baby cabbage) This ball-headed cabbage is perfect for mini vegetable production – harvest and strip away the outer leaves to use the tennis ball-sized heart. Picked young and fresh gives this cabbage a tender, sweet, crunchy leaf unlike larger cabbages that have a strong iron flavour. Once steamed the hearts have a soft, buttery texture. Flavours enhanced in a seasoned brine that soaks into the cabbage and gives it a meatiness. 30cm. AGM*.

12 *Tagetes minuta* (apple marigold) An unusual and unique-flavoured herb, light apple with citrusy, fruity undertones. Leaves, both fresh or dried, are perfect for making a refreshing infusion and can be infused into cocktails. Flavour is strong when grown as a microherb and used to garnish tropical fruit desserts. Seeds can be sown in spring and grown into a tall plant when leaves can be harvested and dried. 1.8m.

13 *Mertensia maritima* (oysterleaf) Flat, fleshy, succulent blue-grey coloured leaves with an oyster-like flavour with mineral notes, reminiscent of its natural habitat of the seashore. The spoon-shaped leaves are perfect as a vehicle to serve as a canapé. Mimic its natural growing environment, which is a Scottish coastline, and provide good drainage and sandy soil. A low-growing plant it does not like root disturbance. 50cm.

14 *Brassica oleracea* Gemmifera Group 'Ruby Crunch' (red sprouts) 'Ruby Crunch' Brussels sprouts taste as good as they look. The buds have a milder, sweeter flavour than their green counterparts. Picked fresh and quickly blanched in seasoned water they retain their purple colour, and are a great accompaniment to seasonal game. Alternatively, shell the individual, tightly bound leaves apart and add them to a warm, autumnal salad with chestnuts, bacon and a honey dressing. 75cm.

15 *Pastinaca sativa* (baby parsnips) Ivory-coloured baby parsnips not only look beautiful served whole on a plate but have the same mild celery-like fragrance and intense sweetness of a traditional large parsnip. The benefit of harvesting them small is that the flesh is fine grained with no hard core. Baby parsnips are easily steamed whole, cooked in duck fat or roasted in a butter to caramelise and enhance their flavour, or with a garden honey glaze. Sow in June and July for autumn cropping. 60cm.

16 *Beta vulgaris* 'Detroit Dark Red' (beetroot cress) These delicate, vibrant, neon-pink beetroot shoots have an intense, earthy beetroot flavour and retain a high nutritional content. The fragile shoots require careful handling, but create an elegant dressing for an autumnal goats' cheese salad – which they will complement in both colour and flavour. The beetroot seeds are excluded from light while growing to force the tender pink stems in seven days. 5cm.

17 *Fragaria vesca* 'Semperflorens Alba' (white alpine strawberries) The creamy white berries are harvested from late summer onwards. The delicate berries need to be fully ripe when picked to appreciate their fragrant strawberry flavour with hints of pineapple and vanilla. Slightly larger than a wild strawberry, it lends itself well to both sweet and savoury offerings and a perfect pairing with patés and terrines. 15cm.

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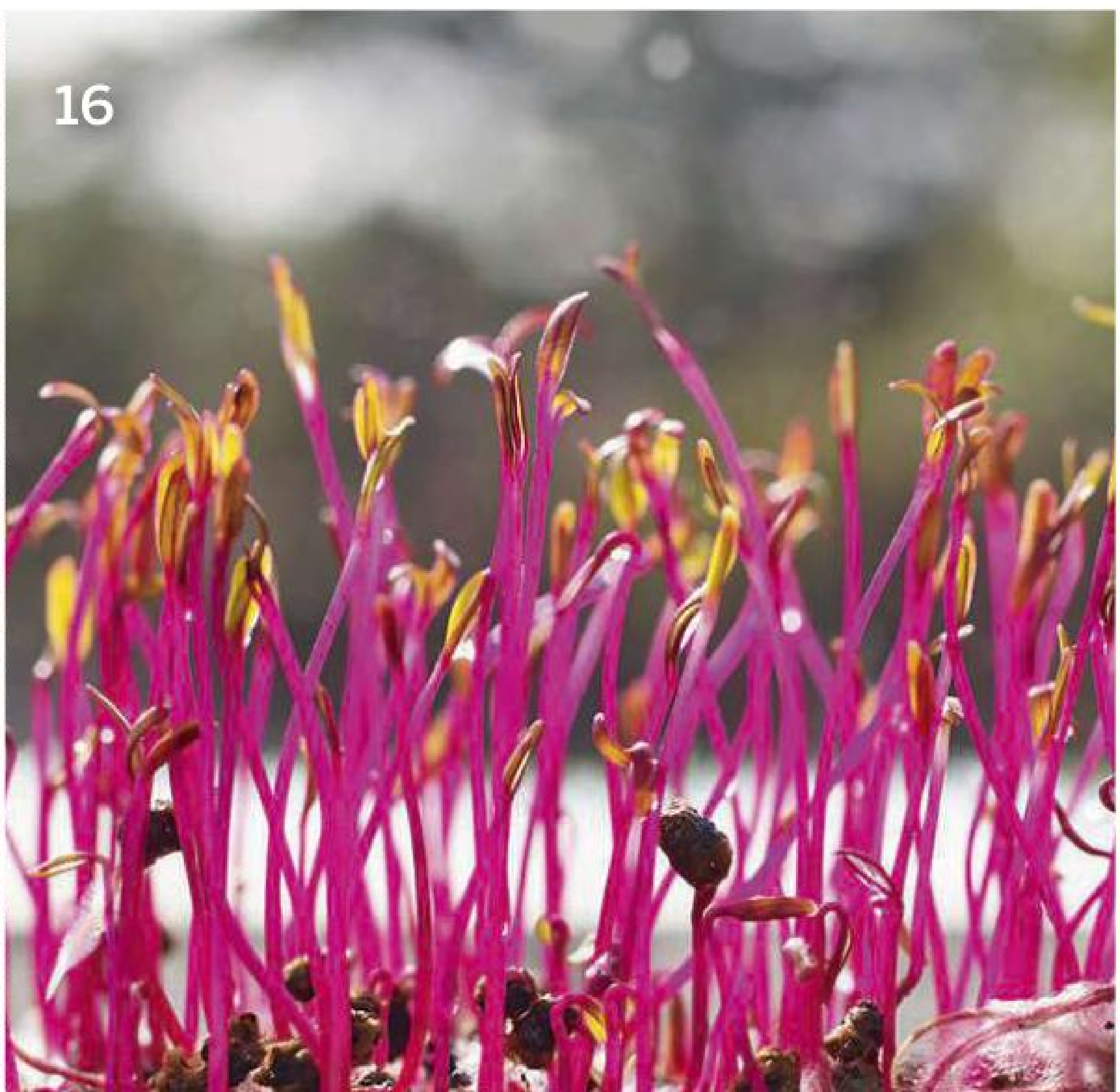
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Size is incredibly important, and many crops are kept small to harness their tender taste

18 *Daucus carota* 'Purple Sun' (baby purple carrot) Pulled as a baby carrot, it has more sweetness and is high in antioxidants. Intensely dark colouring through to its centre is still retained after cooking. Looks striking served whole on a plate of autumnal puréed vegetables with kale and game. The flavour can be enhanced in an infused oil of cumin and coriander seeds. 45cm.

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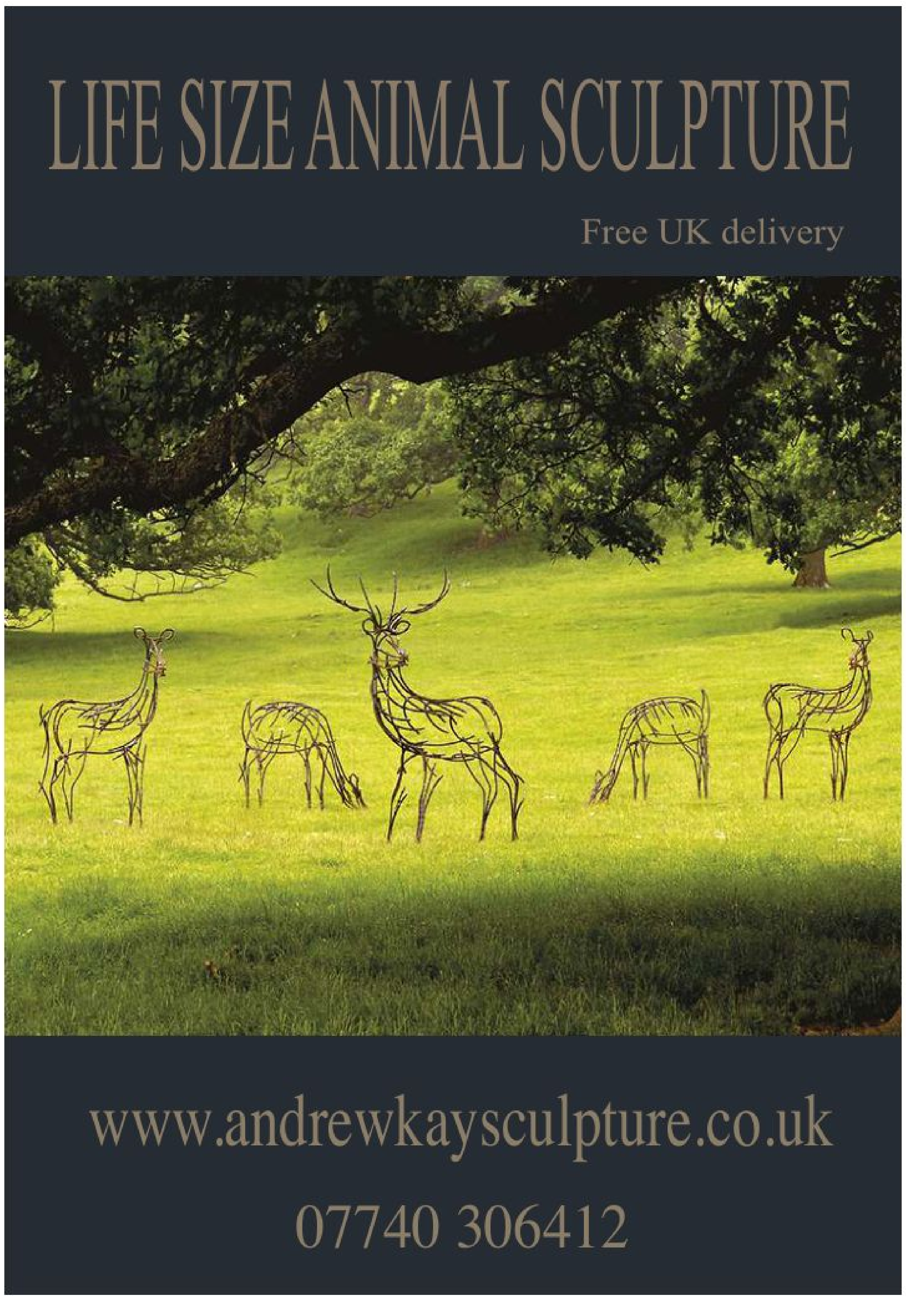

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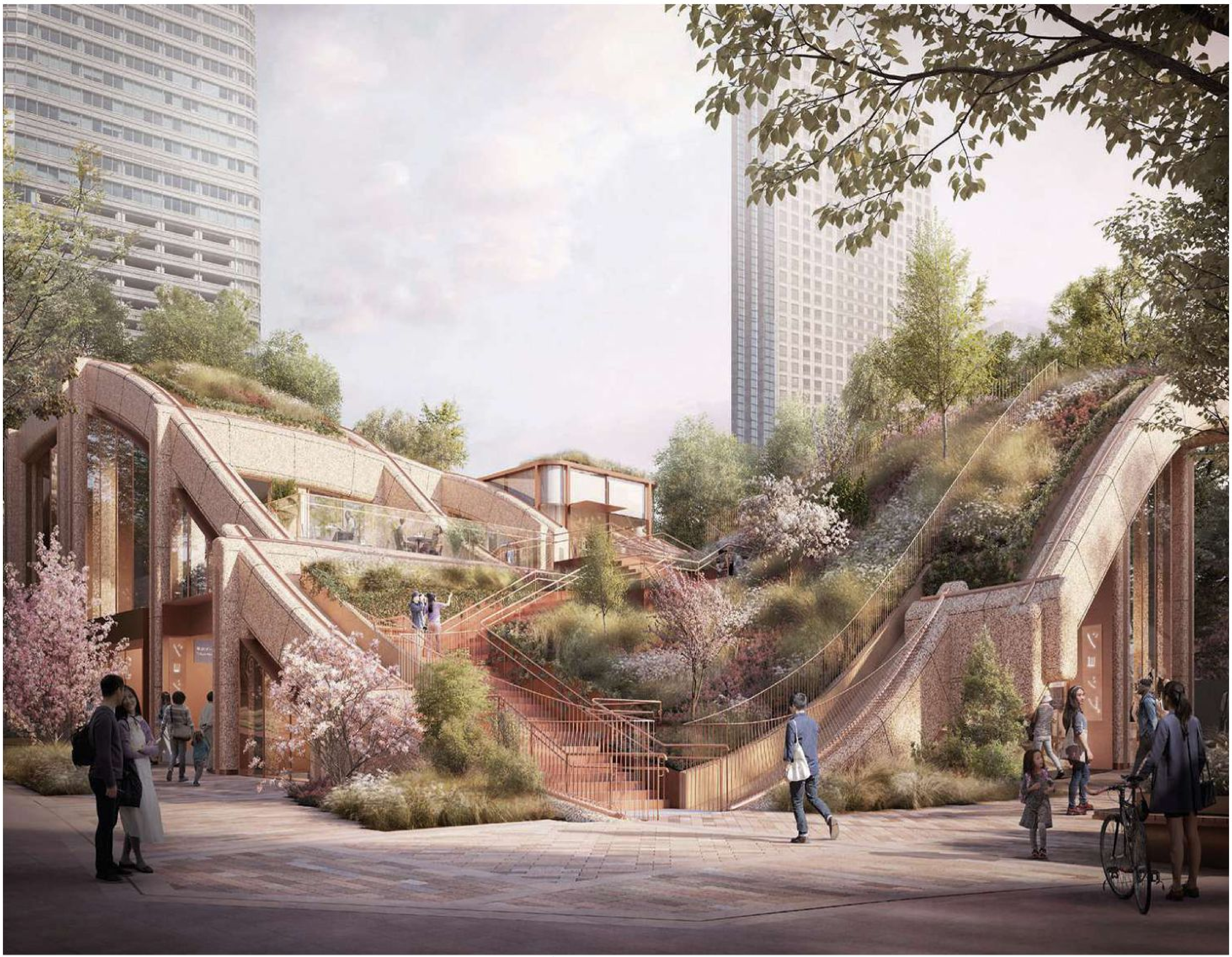
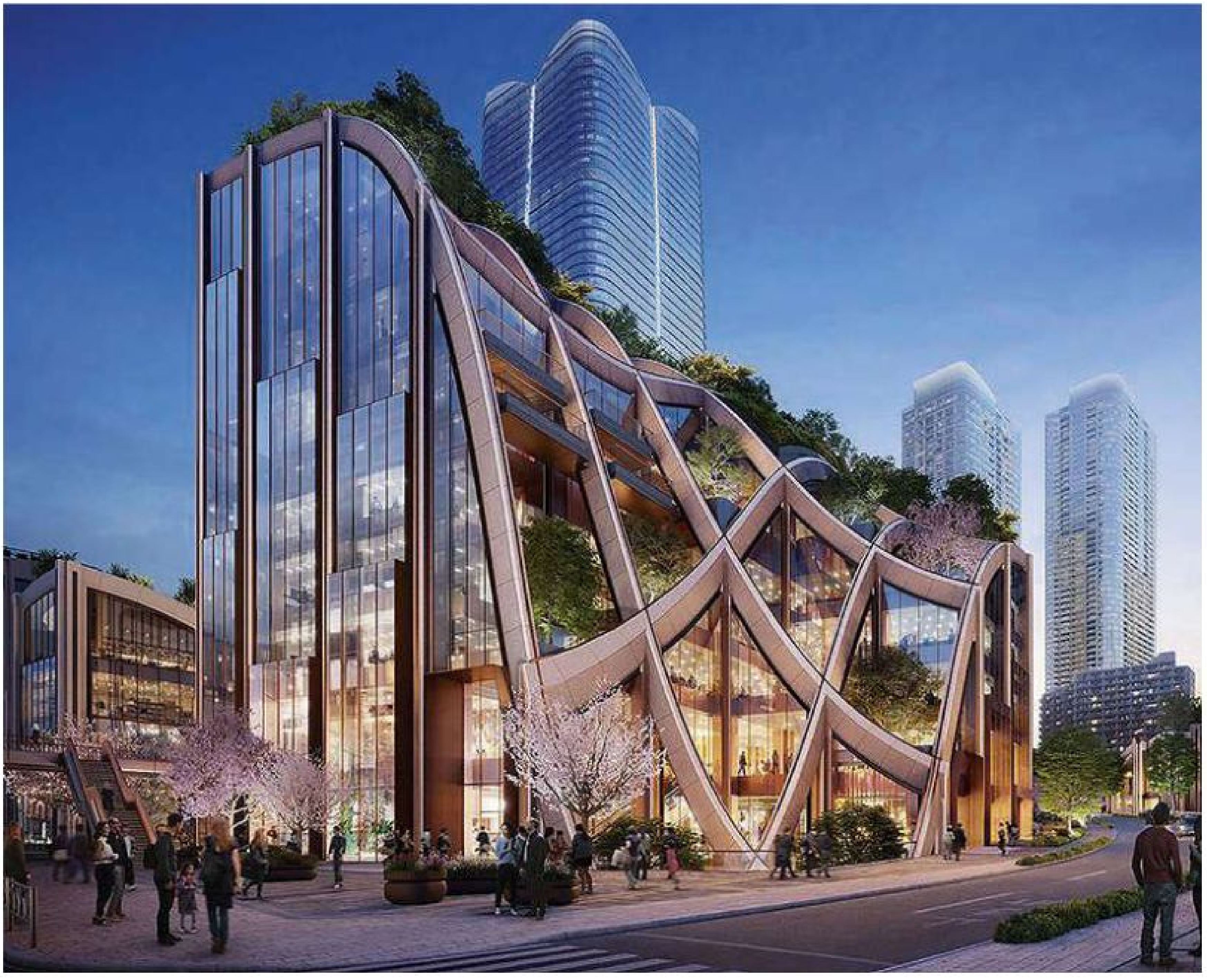


GOING WITH THE FLOW

Construction has started on a 20-acre, mixed-use development in the Toranomon-Azabudai district of Tokyo, Japan, designed by Heatherwick Studio for Mori Building Company. Working with the valley setting and irregular shape of the plot, the studio has created an undulating profile across six buildings, which allows light to penetrate the below-ground, storeys. A pergola-like grid supports a series of terraces and planted slopes that ensure there is a flow of green space from ground level to the high point of the development at 43m. The project is due to be completed by 2023. **heatherwick.com**



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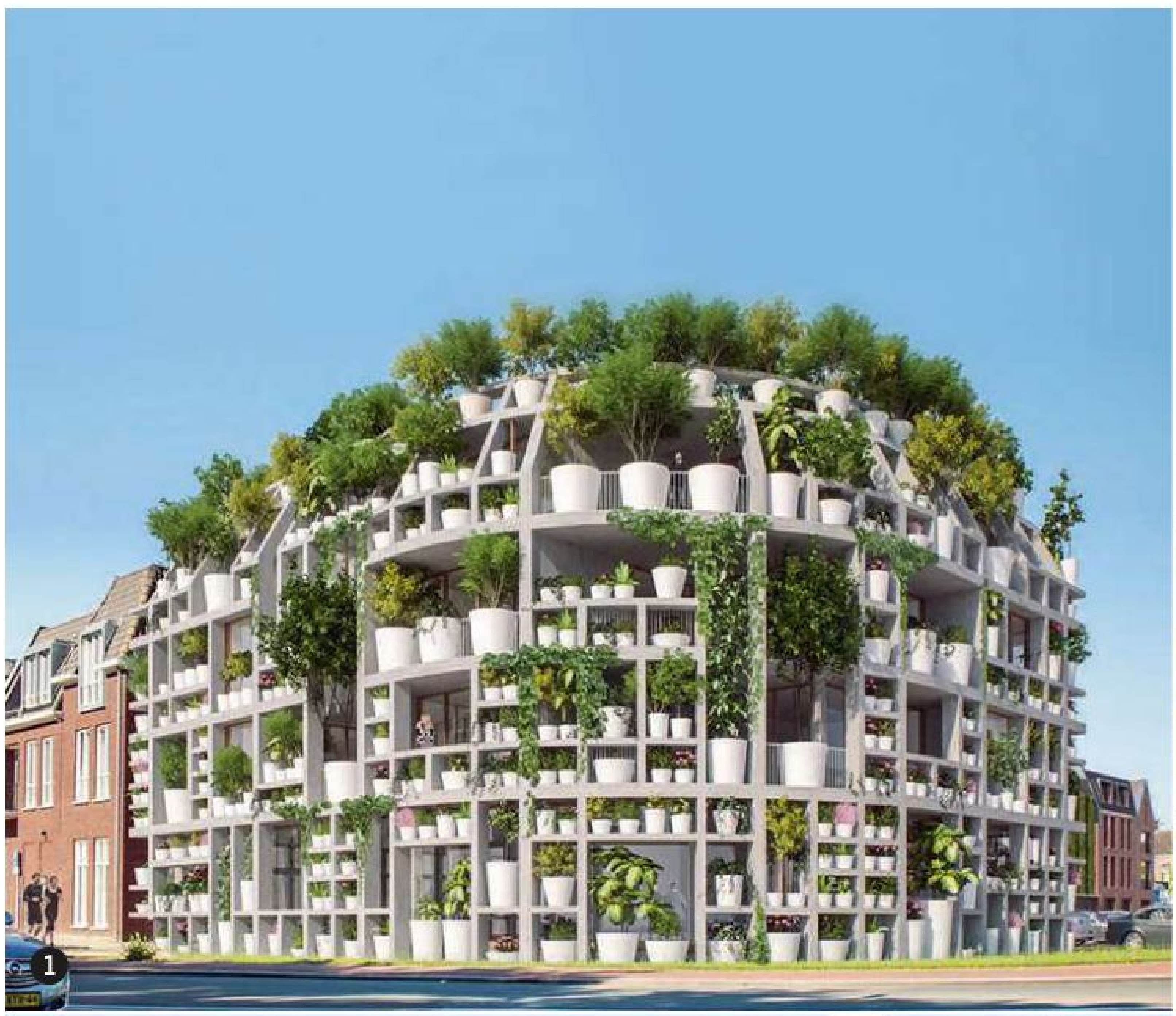
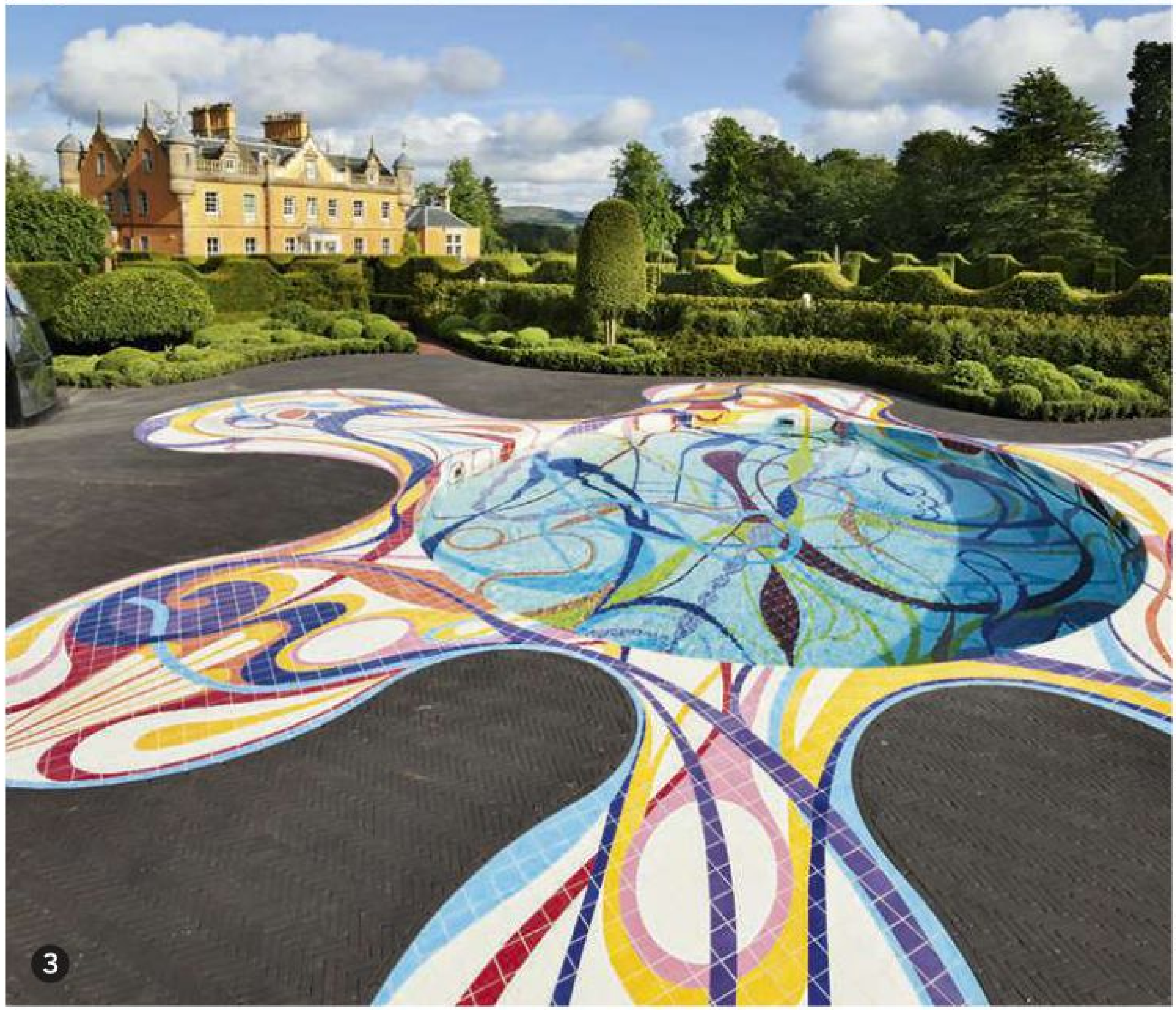
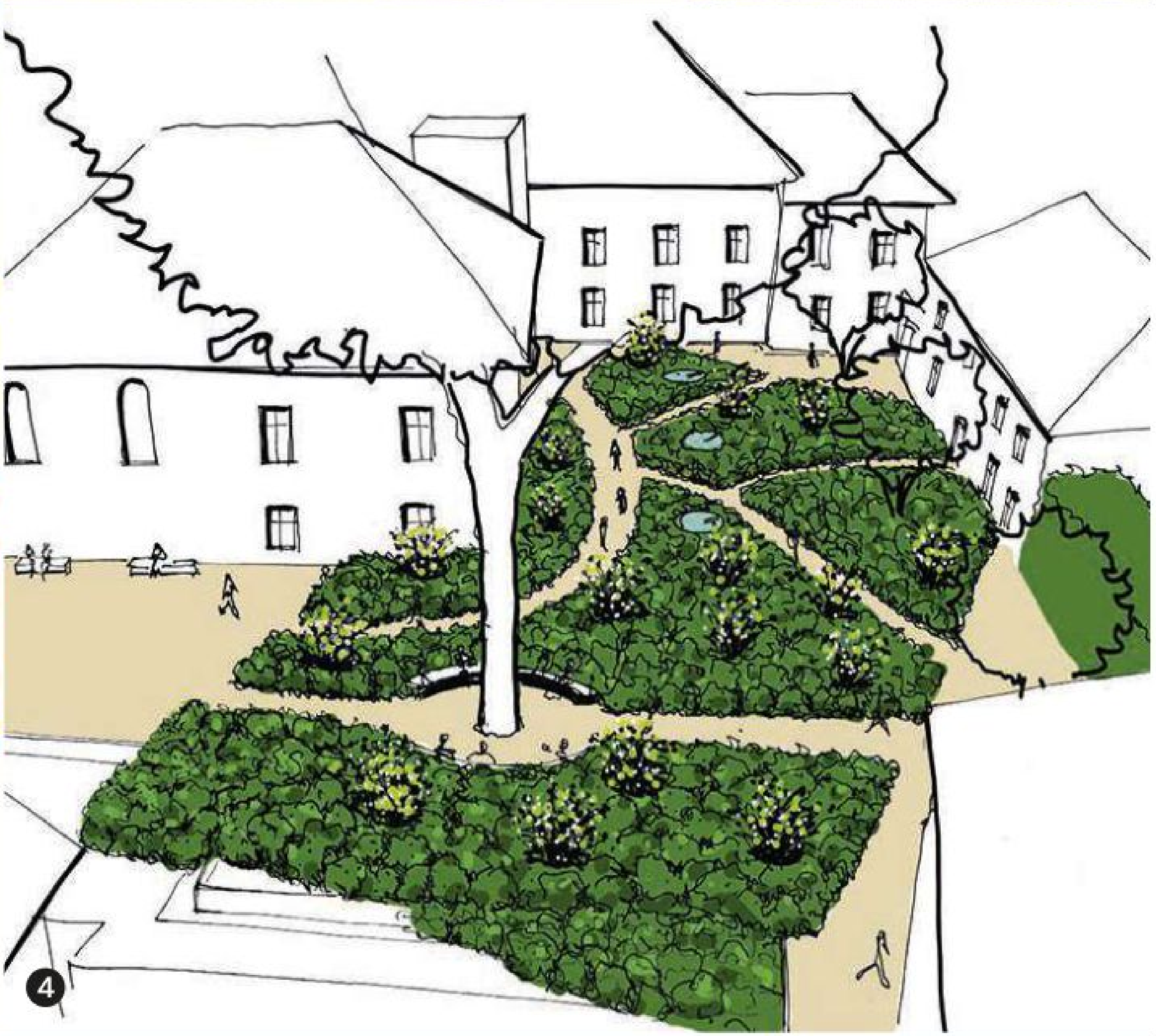






① POTTED UP

A design by Dutch architects MVRDV and Van Boven Architecten reveals how a façade-less construction can be imaginatively greened. Green Villa, in Sint-Michielsgestel in the southern Netherlands, is a four-storey office and residential block that adopts the mansard roof shape of neighbouring buildings. Its indented exterior comprises shelves or balconies of varying depths, which support multiple potted plants selected for the orientation of each space and the need for shade, privacy or views across the nearby river. The planters are irrigated by stored rainwater. **mvrdv.nl**

② OPEN WATER

The latest landscape feature in the regeneration of London's Beckenham Place Park is the restored lake originally created by John Cator, the owner of the park's Georgian mansion. Designed by landscape architects at BDP, the 285m x 50m lake, which is about half the size of the original, is now the capital's first purpose-made public swimming lake. Refreshed with water from a borehole, it is kept clean by an aeration system and aquatic vegetation. An outflow into wet woodland established in the footprint of the original lake will create an ecologically rich habitat. **beckenhamplace.org**

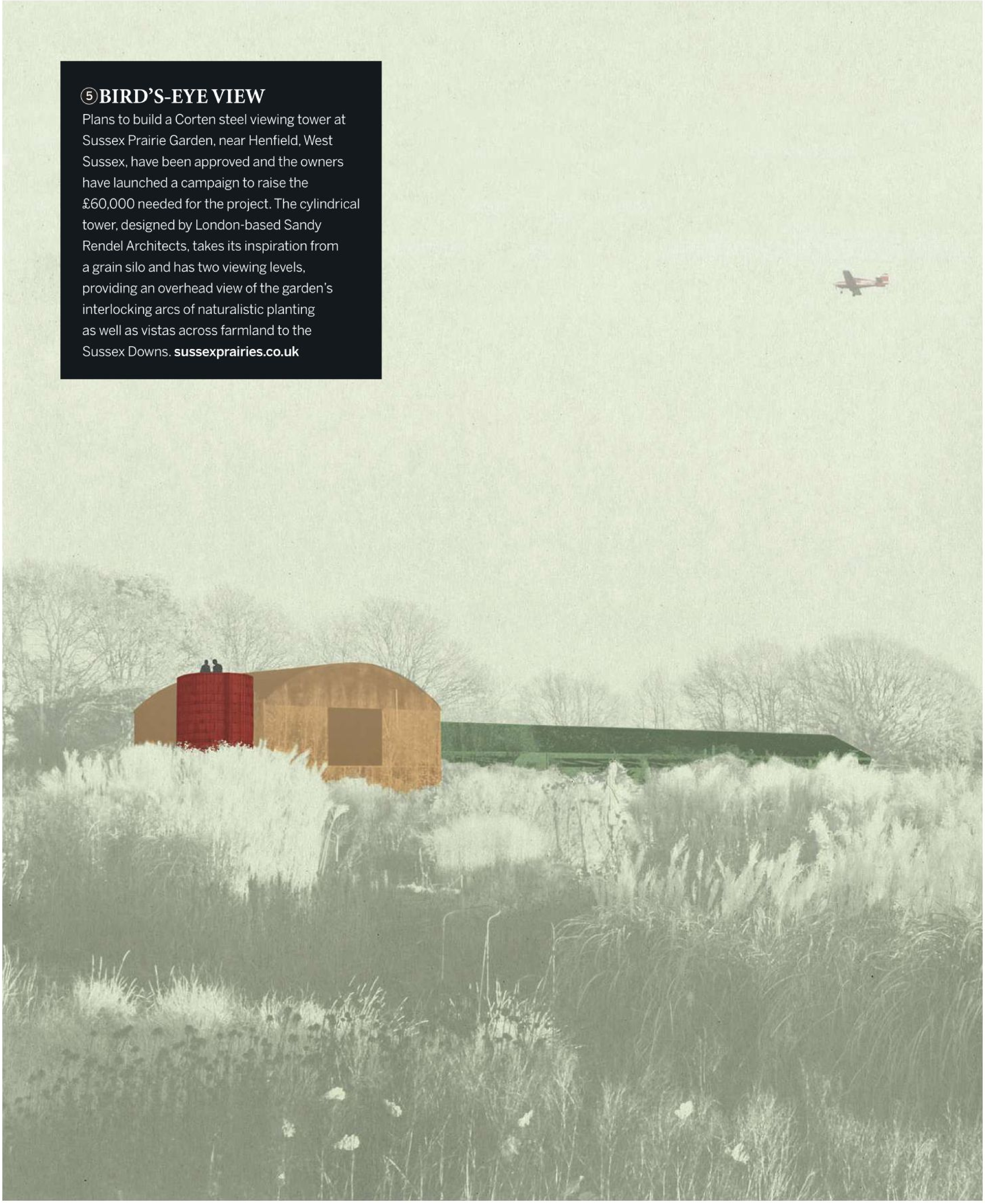
③ ARTWORK MAKES A SPLASH

A new permanent artwork, *Gateway,* has been installed at the Scottish sculpture garden Jupiter Artland. It's a boldly patterned swimming pool in the shape of a flower, by Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos. Incorporating more than 11,000 handpainted tiles, *Gateway* is sited on ley lines that transect Bonnington House, the private residence of owners Robert and Nicky Wilson. Its organic shape, akin to a drop of water that disperses in six directions, is a reference to the interconnection between the owners and their four children. **jupiterartland.org**

④ DESTINATION VILNIUS

London-based Buckley Design Associates has created a landscape masterplan for a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the historic centre of the Lithuanian capital Vilnius. Boksto 6 is a mixed-use development of six buildings around a central courtyard by London-based Studio Seilern Architects. The podium planting in the courtyard is animated with a diagonal magic carpet of perennials, grasses shrubs and small trees, surrounding a retained, 200-year-old lime tree. Additional landscaped areas include a spa garden and streetscape for a residential mews. **buckleydesignassociates.com**

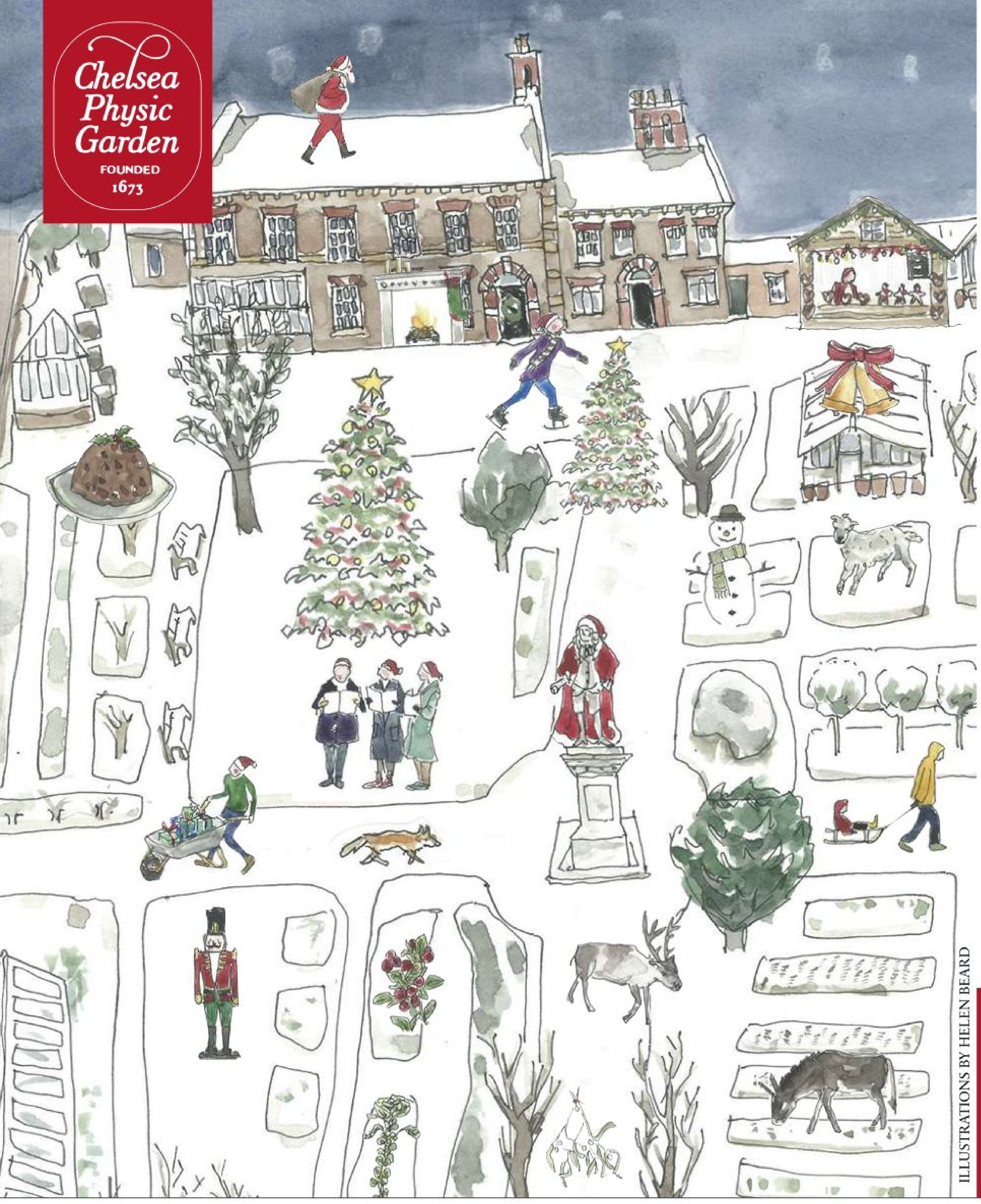
1 MVRDV, 2 BD,3 ALLAN POLLOCK-MORRIS, 4 BUCKLEY DESIGN ASSOCIATES



⑤ BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Plans to build a Corten steel viewing tower at Sussex Prairie Garden, near Henfield, West Sussex, have been approved and the owners have launched a campaign to raise the £60,000 needed for the project. The cylindrical tower, designed by London-based Sandy Rendel Architects, takes its inspiration from a grain silo and has two viewing levels, providing an overhead view of the garden's interlocking arcs of naturalistic planting as well as vistas across farmland to the Sussex Downs. **sussexprairies.co.uk**

SANDY RENDEL ARCHITECTS



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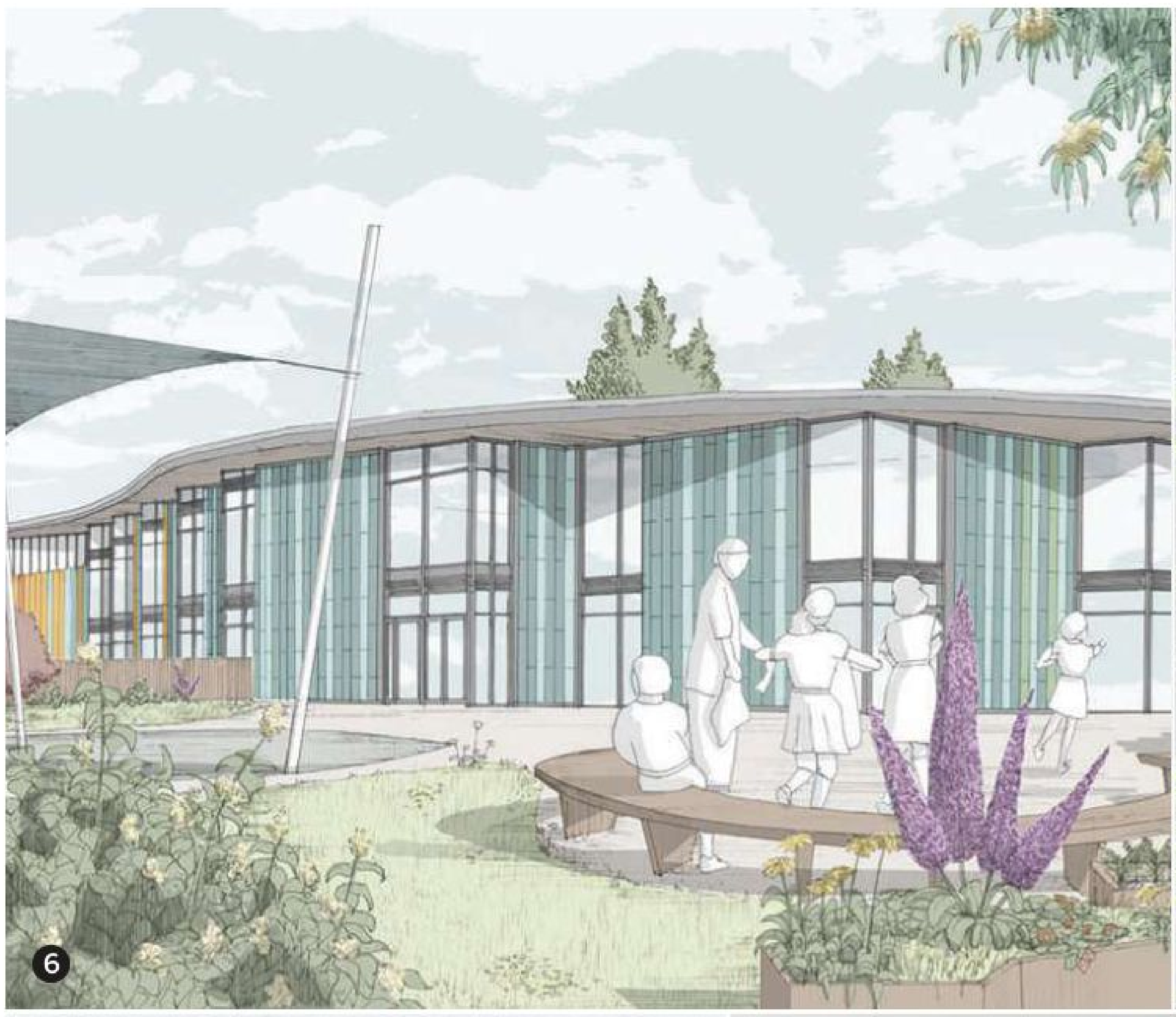

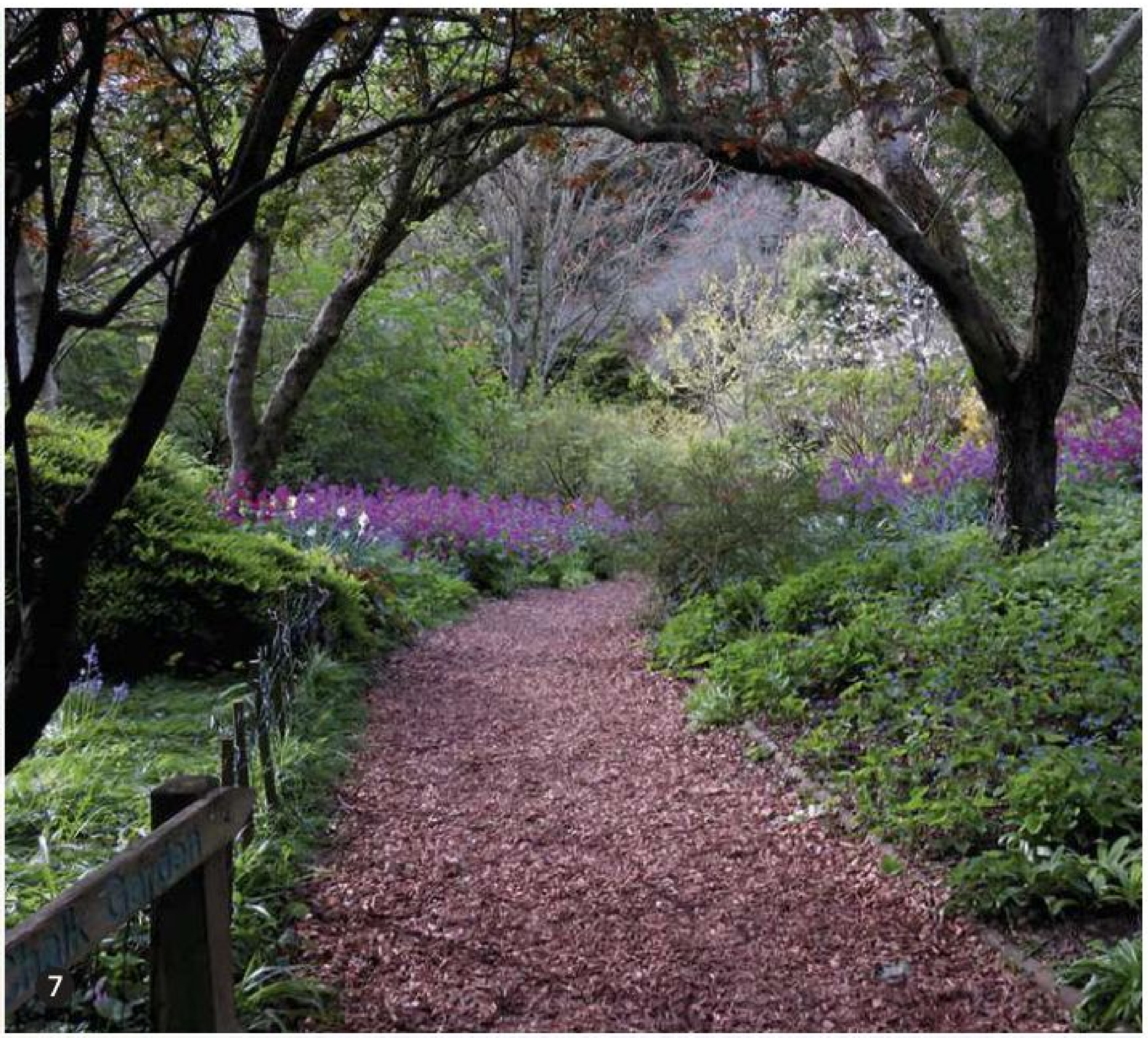

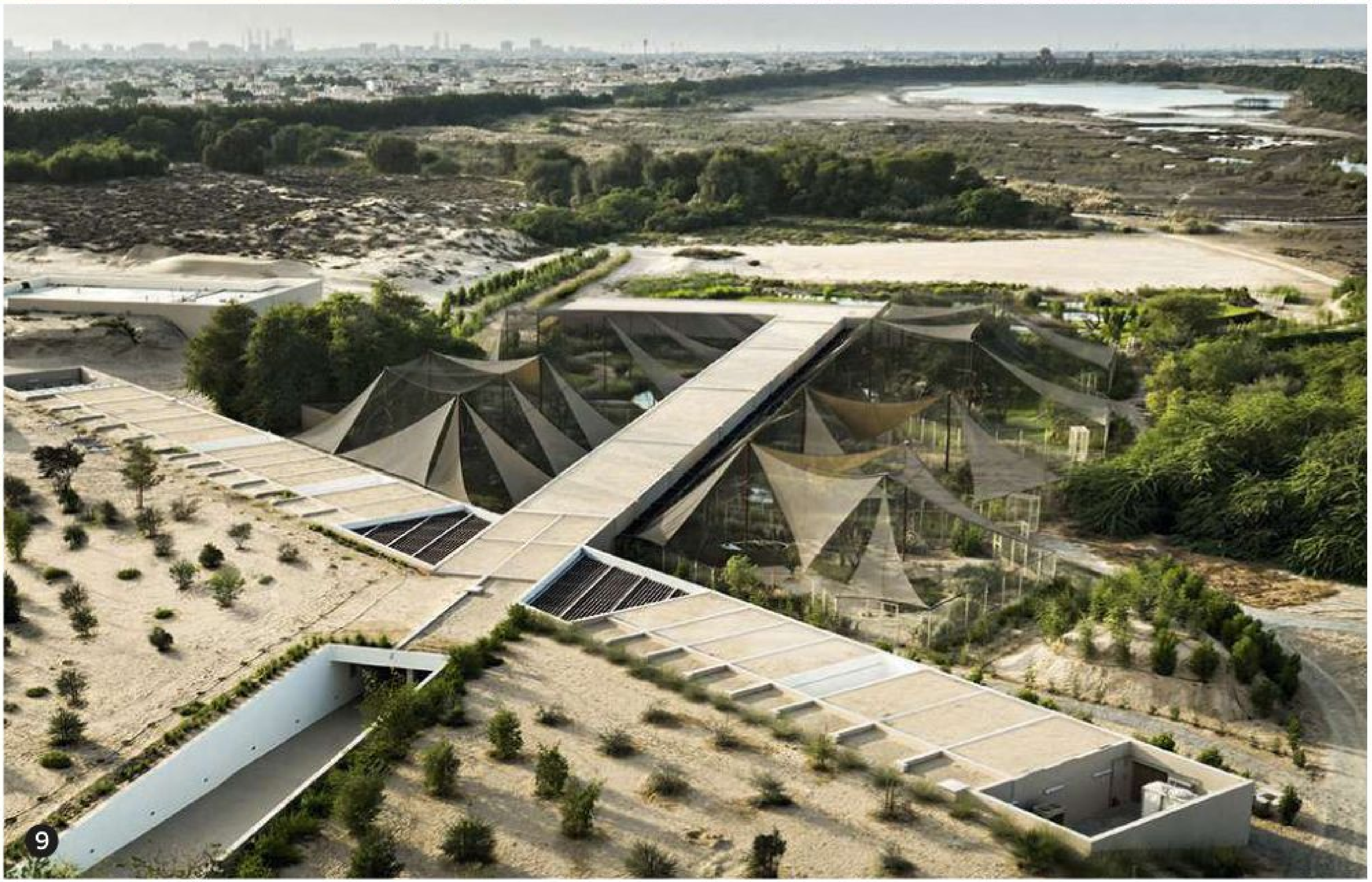

⑥ NATURE IN THE CLASSROOM

Planning permission has been granted for a timber-built academy school at the heart of a 400-acre development of 2,800 homes in St Neots, Cambridgeshire. The £14.2-million primary school for 700 pupils, designed by London-based architects dRMM, has a woodland grove at the centre of its elliptical layout. The engineered timber for the construction material was chosen with wellbeing considerations in mind, as studies have shown that children who are taught in a timber classroom are calmer than those taught in a standard classroom. **drmm.co.uk**

⑦ FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Highdown Gardens, the Sussex garden filled with exotic plants by Sir Frederick Stern at the beginning of the 20th century, has been awarded more than £900,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. As well as enabling propagation of the hundreds of rare plants and trees that form a National Collection, the award will fund the remodelling of the original garden bungalow into a visitor centre, the creation of a new sensory garden, the opening of views out to the sea, and accessibility improvements to the entrance and the pathways. Work will start on the garden, now owned by Worthing Borough Council, in 2020. **highdowngardens.co.uk**

⑧ SAFE HAVEN

A forgotten corner of the garden at Little Harbour Children's Hospice in St Austell, Cornwall is now home to a garden shelter designed by Darren Hawkes and funded by the charity Greenfingers. Here children can be outside while protected from the elements. The steel-framed structure on the edge of a copse is open on two sides, which creates a sense of being in the planting and connected to the landscape. Cedar roof cladding follows the curves of the steel frame to make a solid back and a gap at the base allows plants to spill into the shelter. Planting is a combination of perennials and grasses. **greenfingerscharity.org.uk**

⑨ WETLAND CENTRE FLIES HIGH

A former waste-dumping ground in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, which has been transformed into a wetland centre for birds, is one of six winners of this year's Aga Khan Award for Architecture that will share the US$1-million prize. The Wasit Wetland Centre, designed by Dubai-based X-Architects, was planted with indigenous species to provide the best environment for the birds that fly free in giant aviaries, shaded by angled sails. A cantilevered truss roof over the viewing gallery allows for seamless glazed façades, and six bird hides provide additional viewing sites around a lake. **akdn.org**

6 DRMM ARCHITECTS. 7 WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL. 8 DARREN HAWKES. 9 AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE / CEMAL EMDEN

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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The front door is uncluttered and welcoming with a warm-coloured brick path leading to it and climbers softening the façade. Gently coloured herbaceous borders flank the door and a double row of pleached trees frame the entrance area and create a sense of arrival.

A hearth area near the kitchen includes a large outdoor dining table under an oak pergola with a barbecue and fire bowl, where friends and family can gather, share food and fellowship and create happy memories.

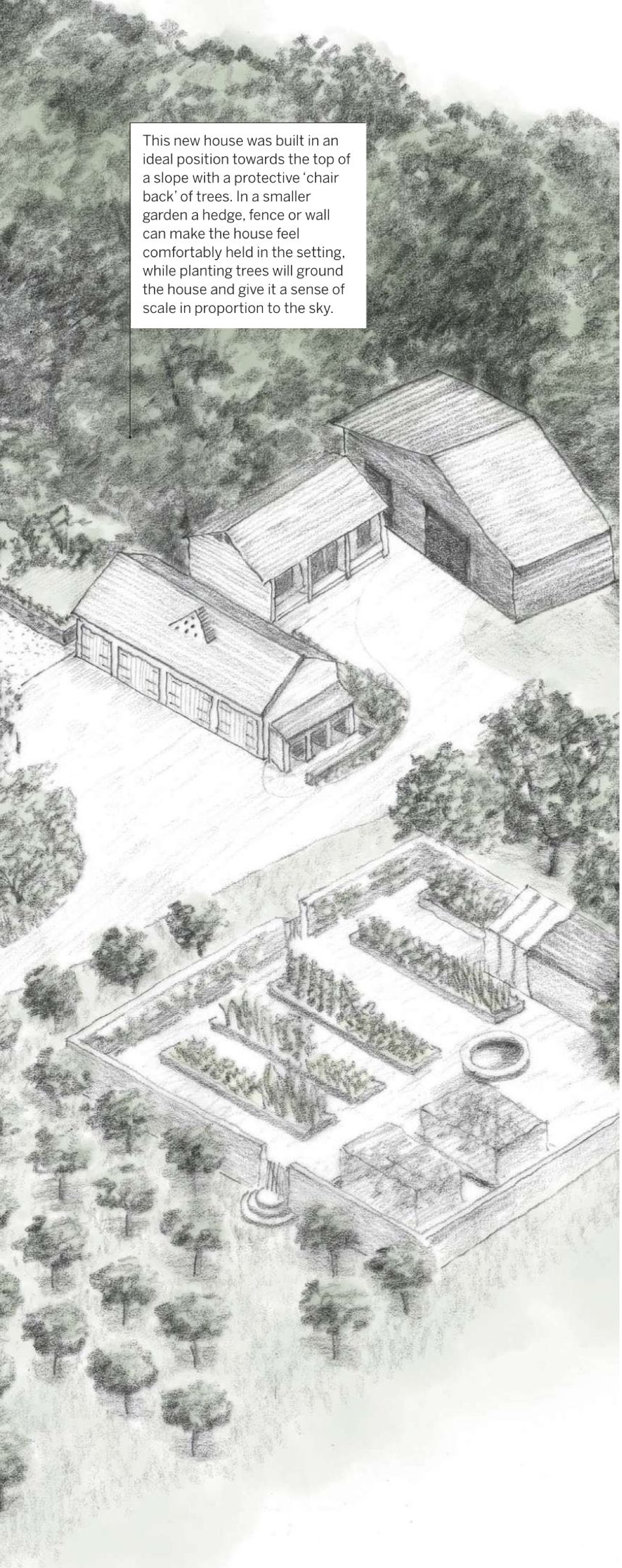
An area of tranquil planting near the house, with a simple raised reflection pool, provides a calm space away from the livelier hub, while a larger pond below the garden arrival area collects dispersed energy in the form of water.

Parking is moved away from the house with bays for visitors here and more at the rear. In a smaller garden a layer of planting in pots or gravel can be a buffer between cars and the house.

A curved drive or path from the outside of the property, flanked with planting, allows the energy coming off the street to be filtered, as well as giving those arriving time to unwind, leave the outside world behind, and enjoy the garden on the way in.

The arrival area, known in *feng shui* as the *ming tang*, or bright hall, is where all prosperous energy gathers. Here the layout is a circle within a square, but any enclosed shape will gather good *qi*.

Vibrant planting beside the kitchen draws the eye and adds *yang* energy to the main family party area around the dining room and pergola, as well as providing a visual focal point to lead around from the front door.



This new house was built in an ideal position towards the top of a slope with a protective 'chair back' of trees. In a smaller garden a hedge, fence or wall can make the house feel comfortably held in the setting, while planting trees will ground the house and give it a sense of scale in proportion to the sky.

SOPHIE POLLOCK FOR MBLA

Creating a garden where you can thrive

Is it possible to improve how you feel simply by changing the layout of your garden? Designer Marian Boswall suggests ways to create a garden full of healthy energy

WORDS MARIAN BOSWALL

Have you noticed how some gardens can inspire you while others seem to make you feel uncomfortable? Do you associate one of your happiest times with a specific place? Or perhaps your life once changed significantly when you moved home. As well as giving us physical protection the environment in which we lives gives us support, and allows us to thrive.

The idea of a place having a spirit, or what the Romans described as a genius loci, that can have a tangible effect on our psyche is not new. Anyone who has ever visited Rousham, for example, will almost certainly have experienced the profoundly serene and energising spirit of this garden where in the 18th century, the landscape designer and polymath William Kent worked with the lay of the land to create one of our most inspiring gardens.

Before Kent, philosophers and artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci, understood the importance of ensuring that the proportions of everything should be in relation to the human form. Renaissance landscape architecture extended this connection by aligning sight lines to the compass points of the Earth and sun's trajectory.

Positive energy

The study of Earth energy has made something of a comeback of late, but the way the layout of a site could help people thrive was studied as early as 206BCE, during the Han dynasty in China. Then a *kanyu* or *feng shui* practitioner was considered an expert in astrology, architecture, economics, geography, hydrology, medicine, sociology and town planning, and it was his job to lay out spaces for humans and animals to thrive in. Fundamental to their work was the balance between two types of energy, or *qi* – *yin* (restful and calm) and *yang* (energetic and exciting) – to allow for both creativity and nurture. So how can you design

▷

> A curved drive or path from the outside of the property to the front door with plants around it will allow guests time to enjoy your garden before they arrive

▷ your garden to fill it with good energy and create a place in which you can thrive?

A curved drive or path, for example, from the outside of the property to the front door with plants around it will allow guests time to enjoy your garden before they arrive at your house. In *feng shui* the area in front of the house is where all good energy gathers from afar, like a pool of prosperity, known as a *ming tang*. In ancient China, it symbolised a ceremonial hall in the Emperor's Palace where the *qi* was considered most potent. The hall would have had a round roof and square foundation, symbolising heaven and earth. I have always envisaged this as a gathering in of good feeling like a welcome hug on arrival for you and your guests. This would ideally have a body of water in or near, be it a pond or a trough, in proportion to the house where good *qi* could accumulate.

The front door is key to allowing the good in and keeping out the bad, and should be welcoming but uncluttered. Mine is surrounded by pots so that means keeping the plants thriving and tidy so that it looks healthy and vibrant. Move cars away where possible or plant between them and the door, to allow a filter and pause between home and the outside world.

Inner protection

It is restful to have the house's back garden protected with a wall, fence, bank of trees or hedge, and for the front to face the most active view. On a slope, the front garden would ideally be lower than the back and face a good road or river of vibrant energy, and if you have the choice the ideal place for a home is near the top of a hill with trees; a grounding link between heaven and earth on any site.

Inside the garden a hearth or gathering space will provide the nurture of fellowship and laughter, and could be a fire pit, a hot tub or just a big table for friendly meals. Planting should be restful and vibrant in turn, the aim is to seek *shen qi* – or good, creative and fertile *qi* – and avoid or transform unhealthy *sha qi*. Shadowy corners can be brightened up with light planting, and the trick is to put the *qi* where you want the attention to go, so if you have an unavoidably ugly or draining spot, put a tree, shrub or feature to redirect the flow elsewhere.

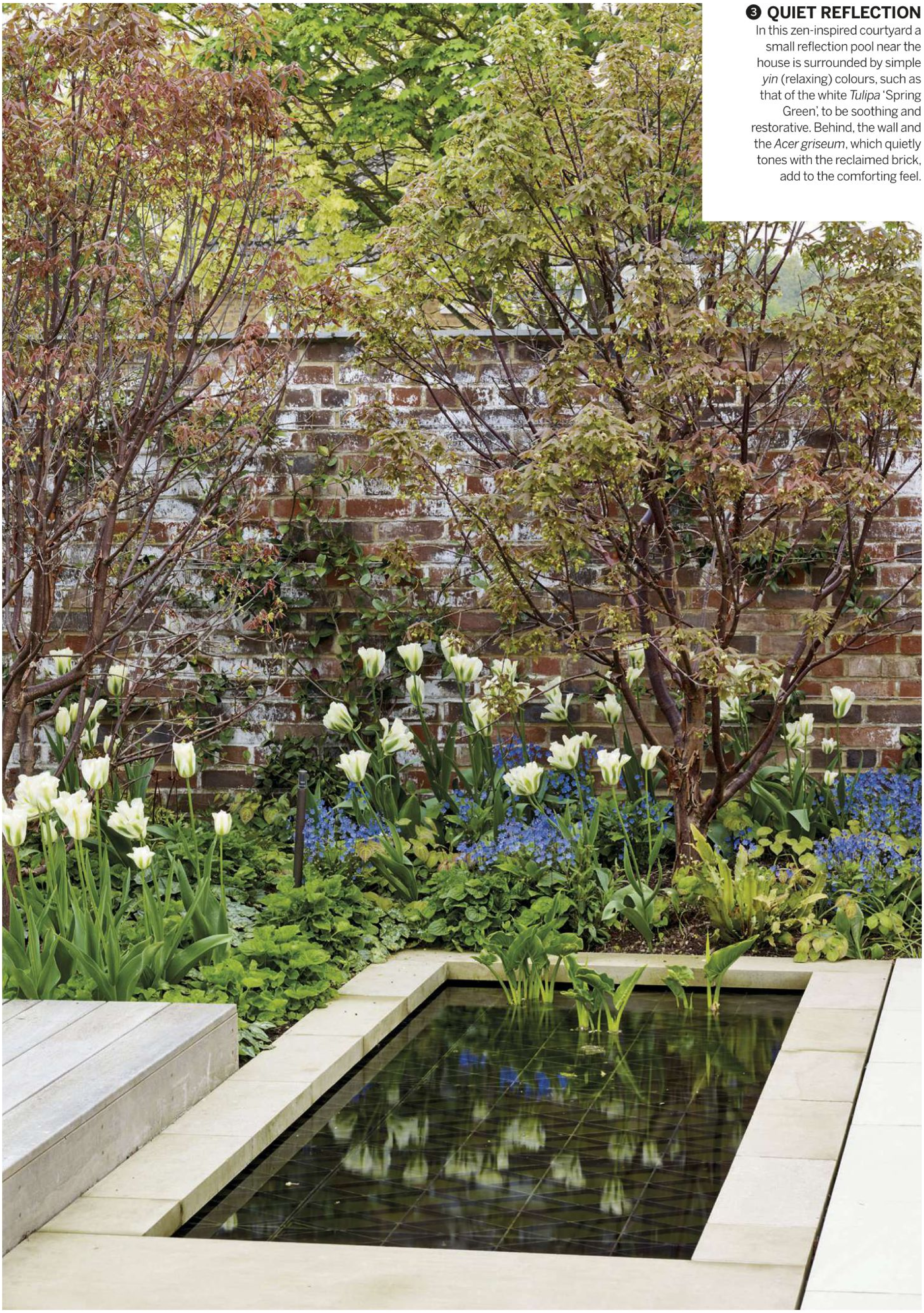
Like many design frameworks, the striking thing about *feng shui* is the way it puts into words things which we probably already felt unconsciously. We cannot always influence the macro environment of where were live, be it rural or urban, but if we are able to design it thoughtfully, we can create a garden where we can thrive. □

Marian Boswall is a multi-award-winning landscape architect with an international practice, MBLA, based in Kent. marianboswall.com

❶ GATHER ROUND
A hearth or gathering area is created with a simple dining table in a comfortably enclosed area in this courtyard garden. Calm planting of *Hakonechloa macra* and umbrella-trained *Tilia* x *europaea* provides a gathering space for friends and family to share meals, news and laughter.

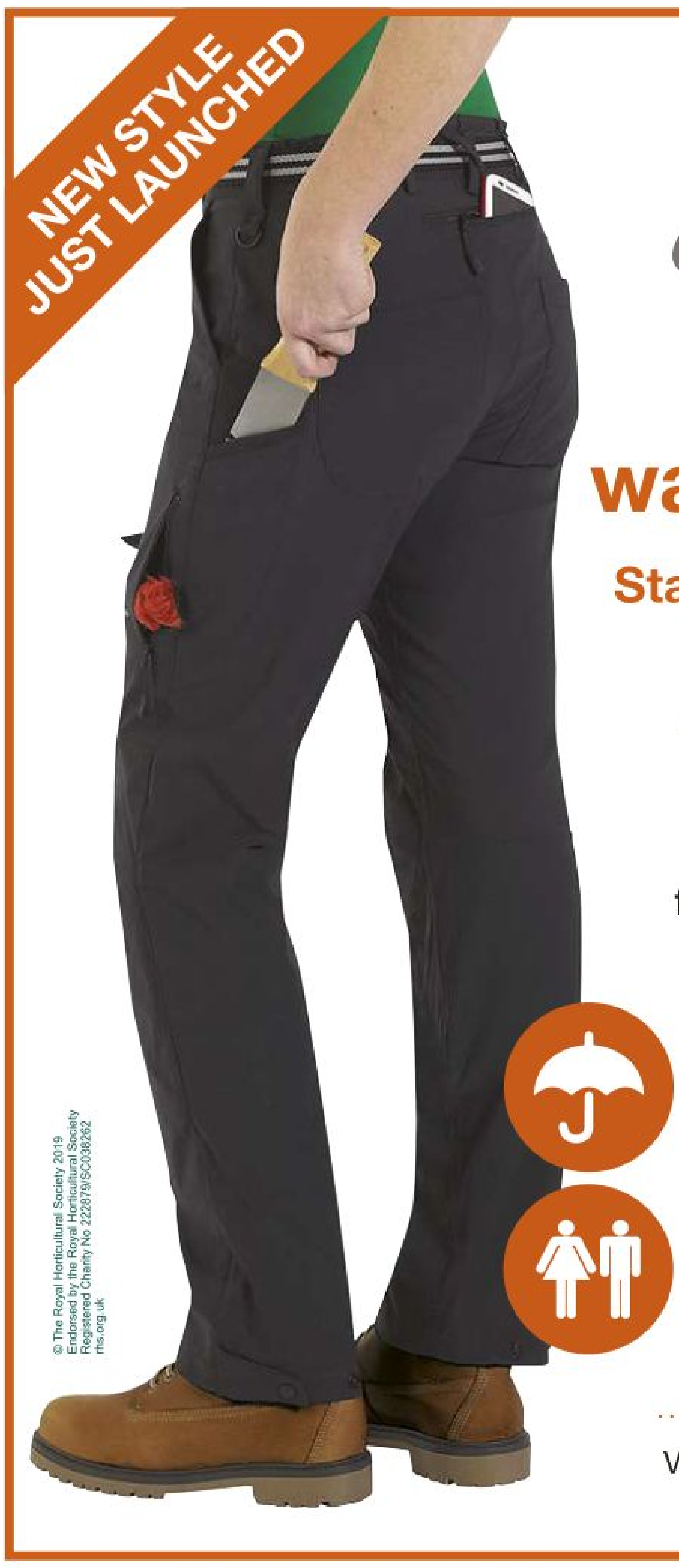
❷ WINDING PATH
This curved pathway leading up to Reighton Wood house in Kent, creates a sense of journey through both calming and vibrant planting towards the house, allowing time for decompression and relaxation alongside the chance to be uplifted by the vibrant *yang* energy planting.

1 MARIAN BOSWALL; 2 & 3 JASON INGRAM



❸ QUIET REFLECTION

In this zen-inspired courtyard a small reflection pool near the house is surrounded by simple *yin* (relaxing) colours, such as that of the white *Tulipa* 'Spring Green', to be soothing and restorative. Behind, the wall and the *Acer griseum*, which quietly tones with the reclaimed brick, add to the comforting feel.



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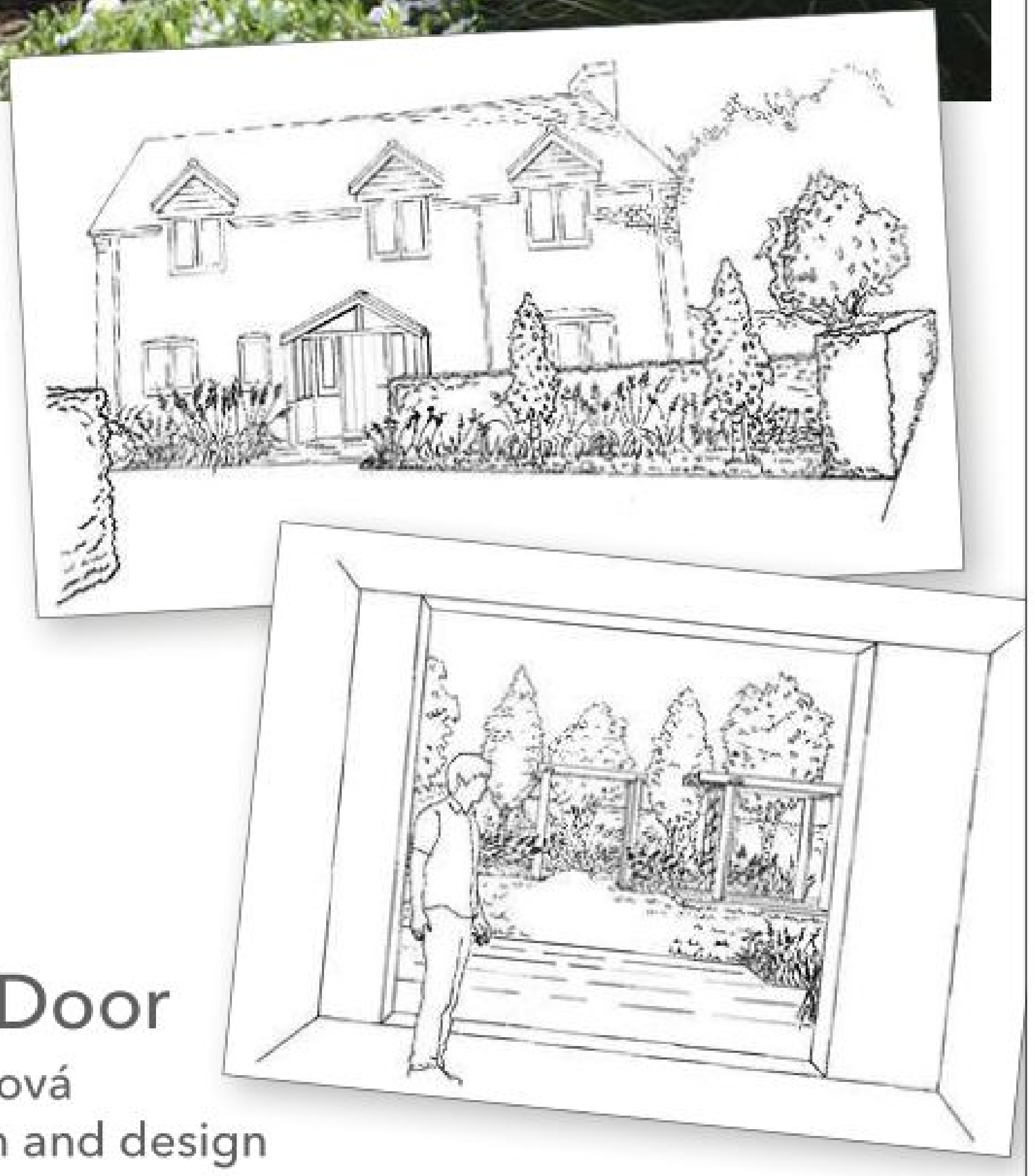

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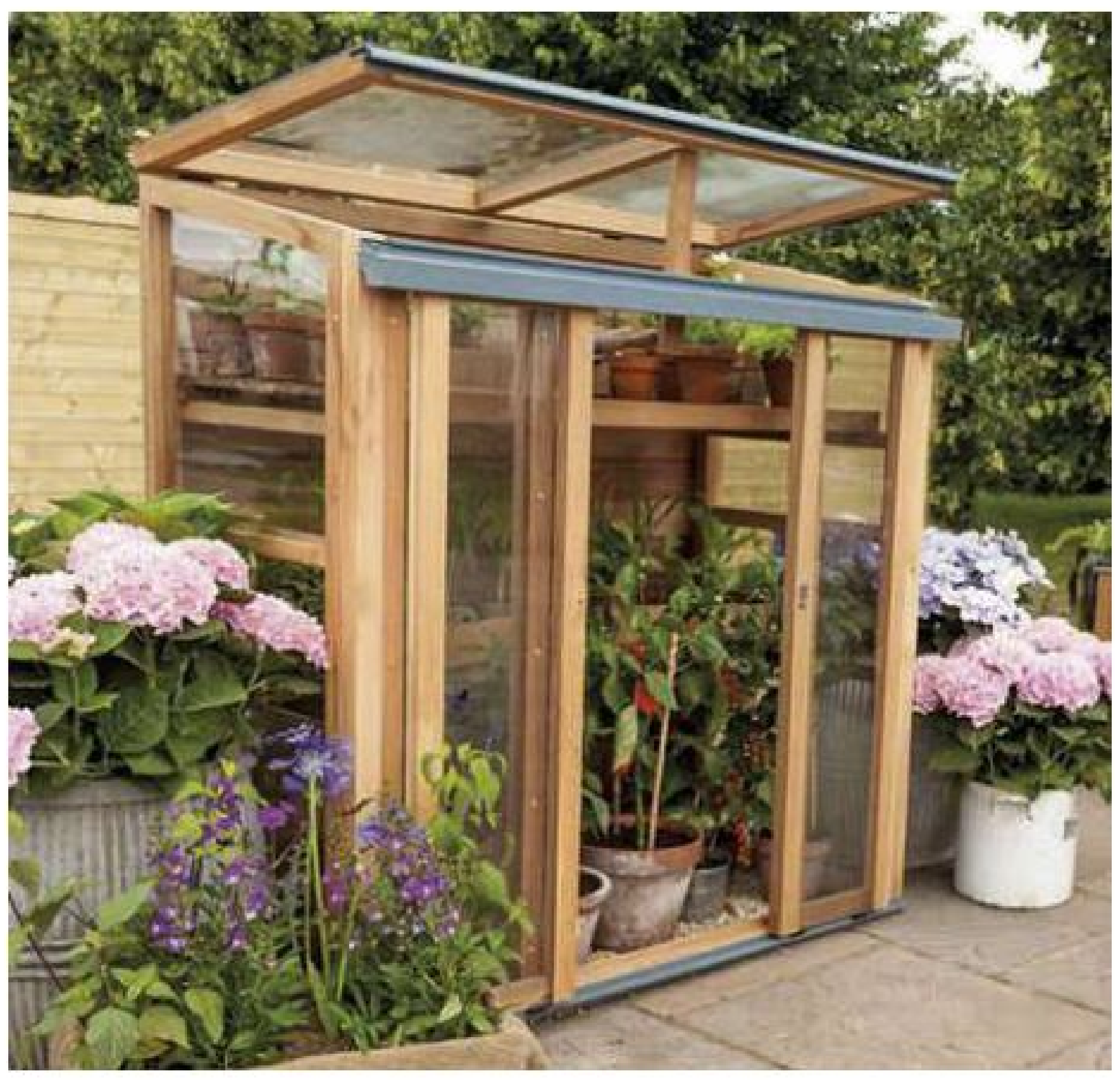

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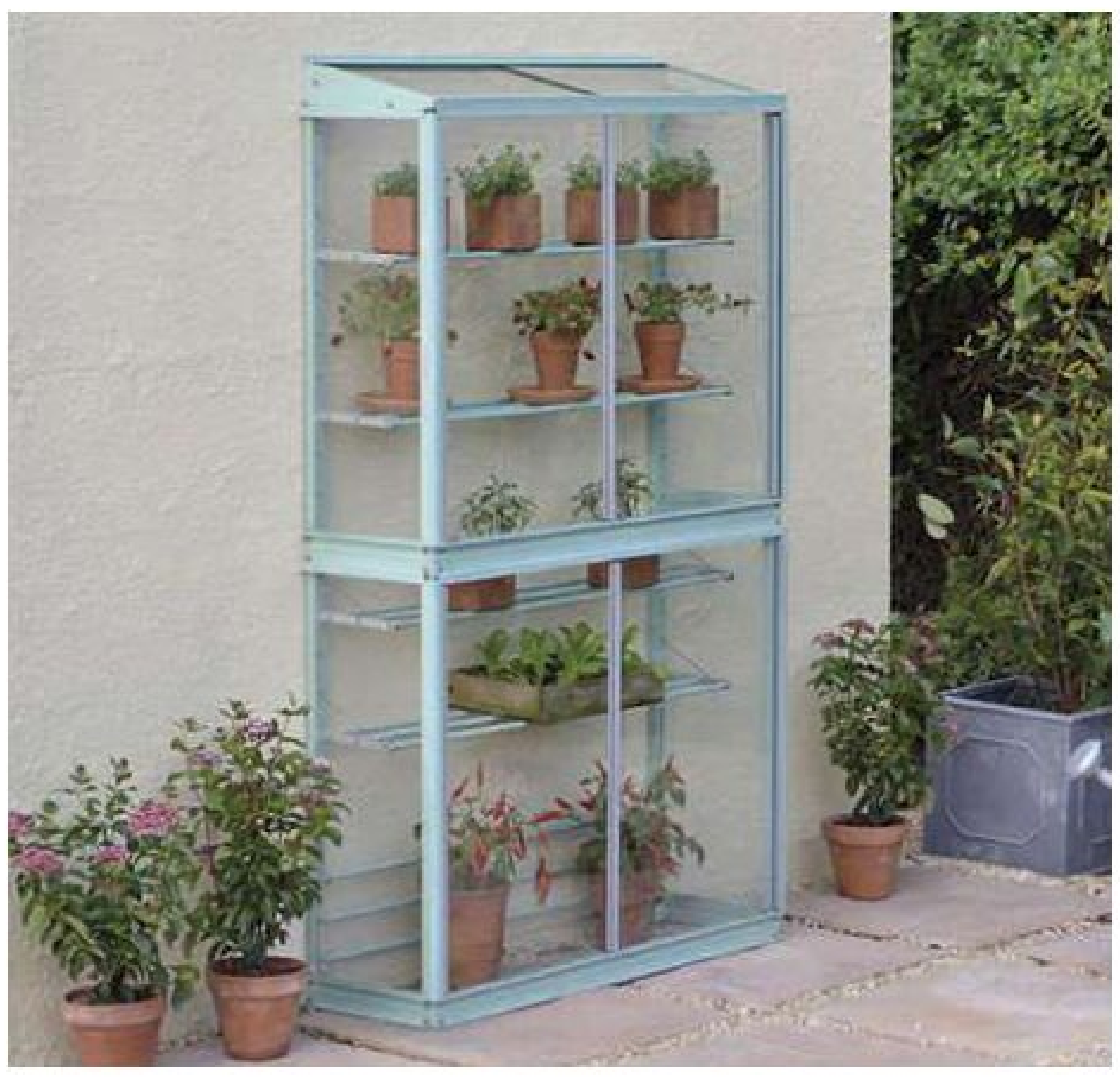

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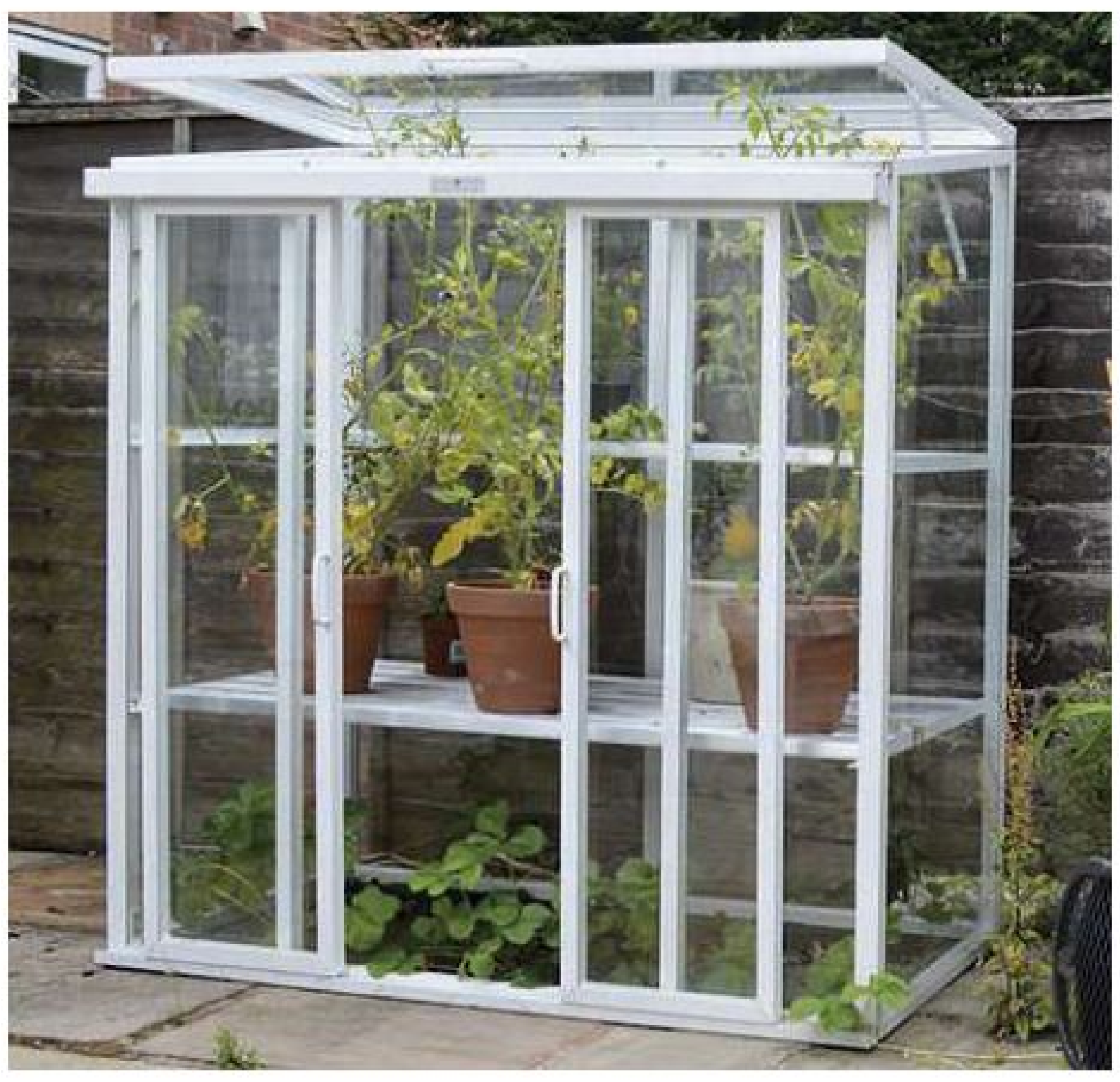

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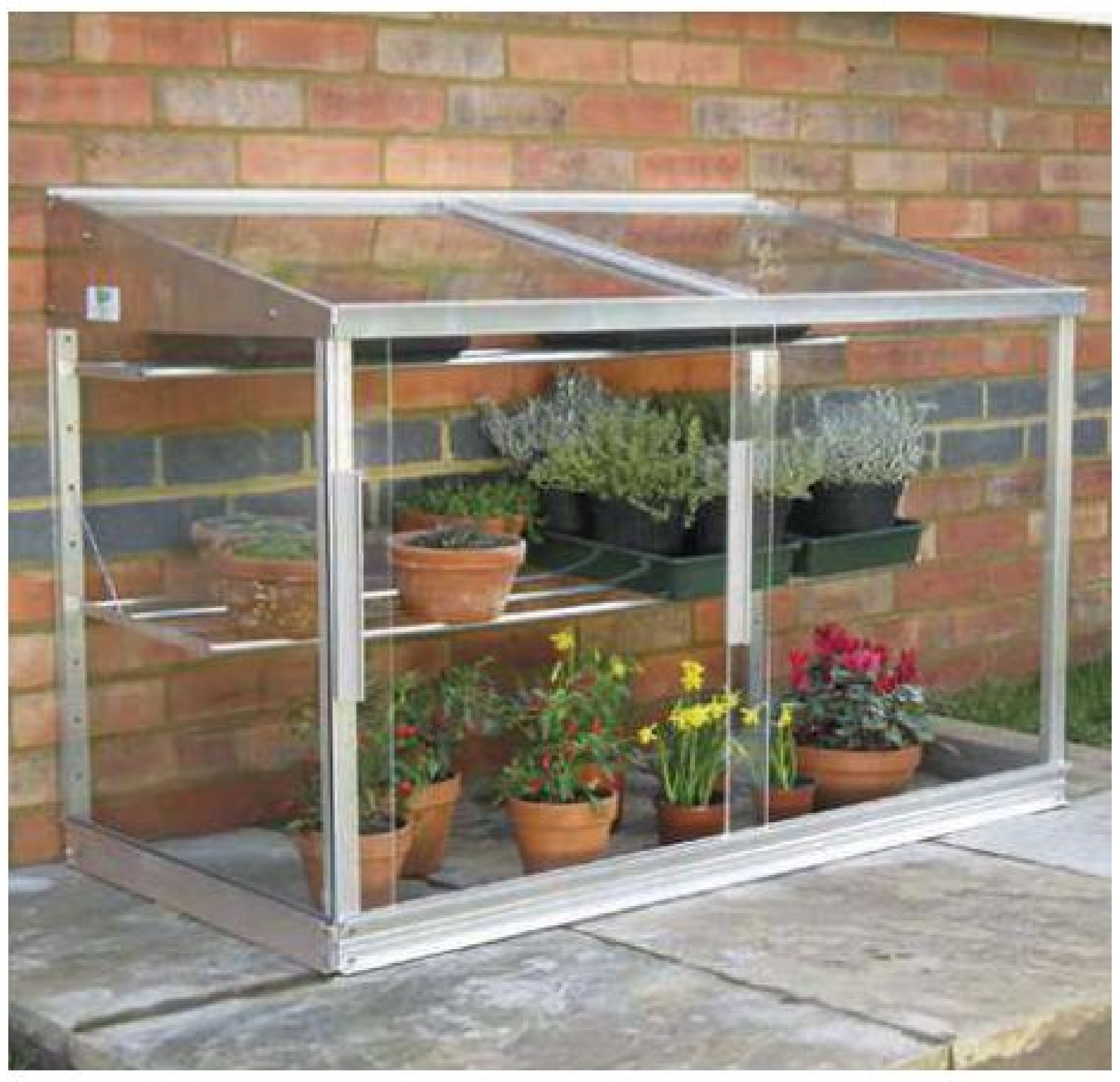

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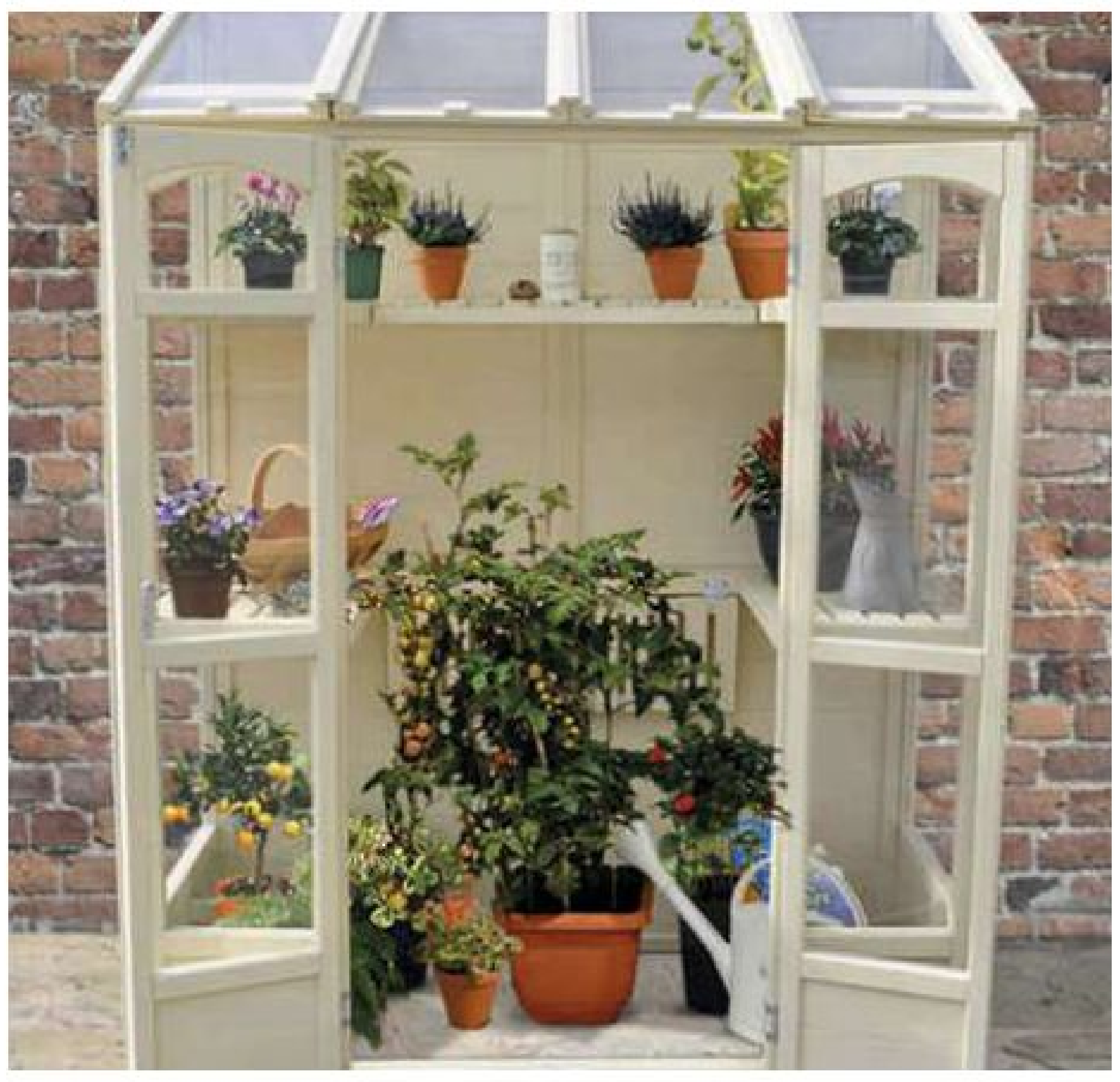

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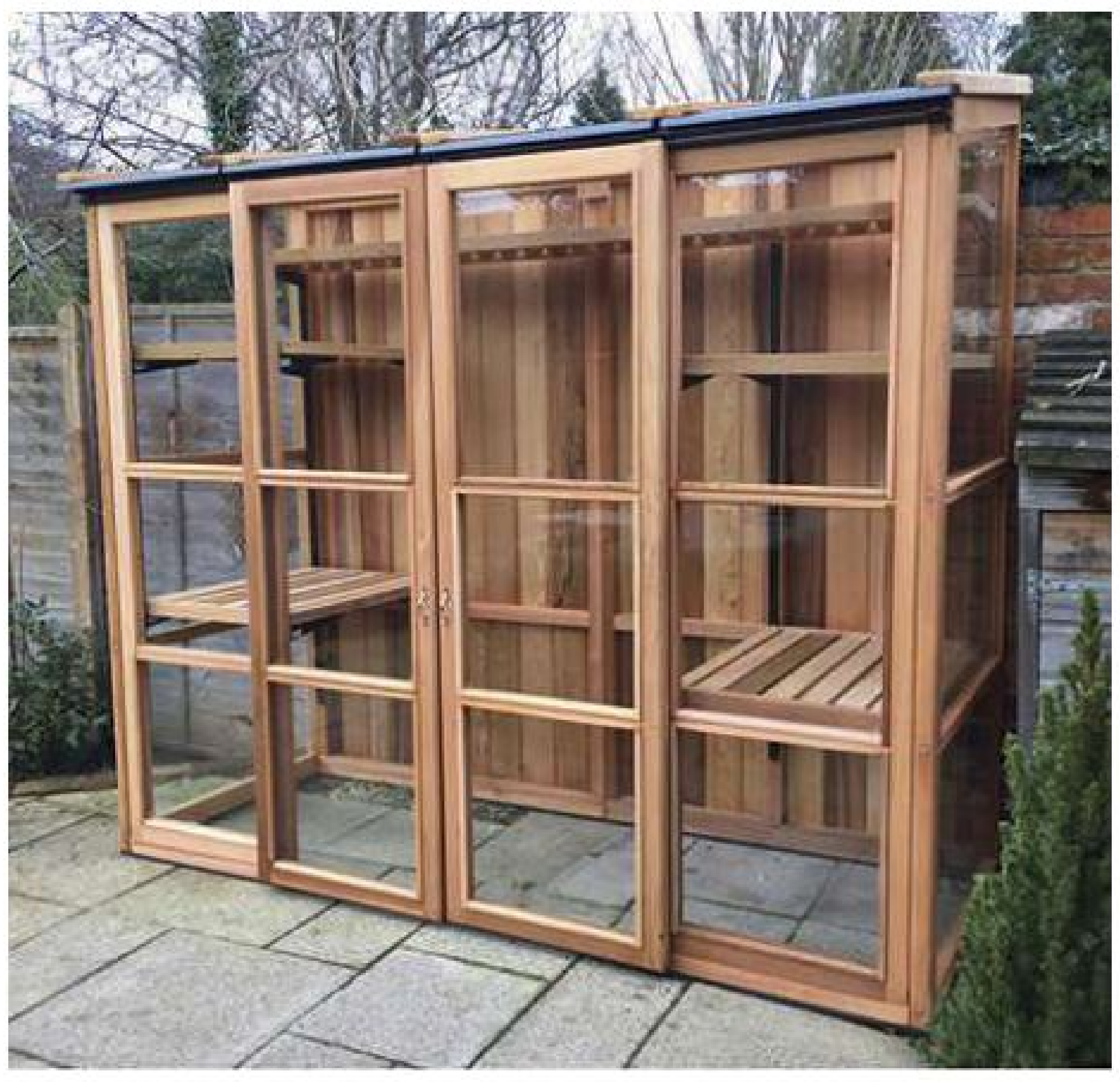

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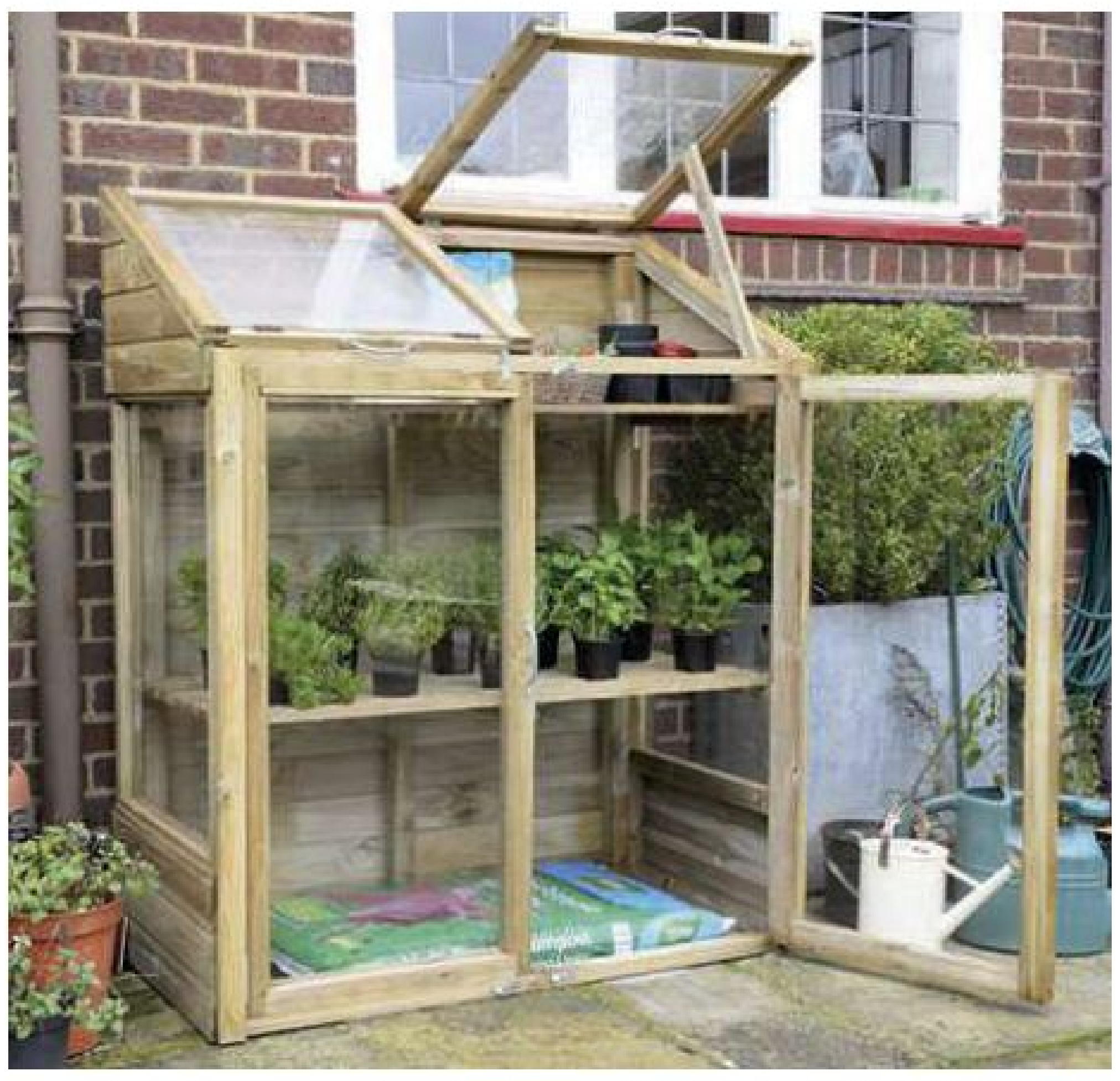

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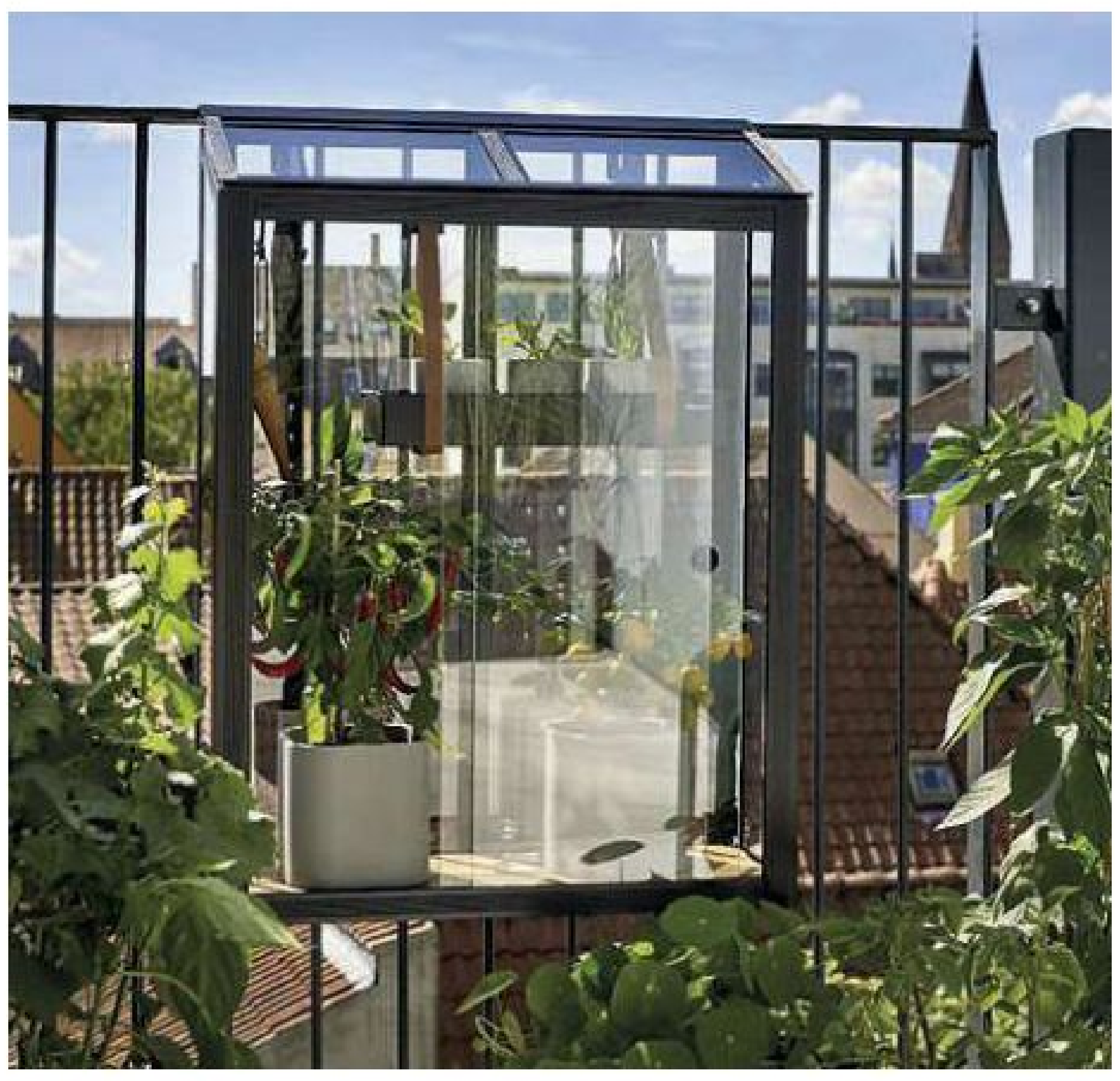

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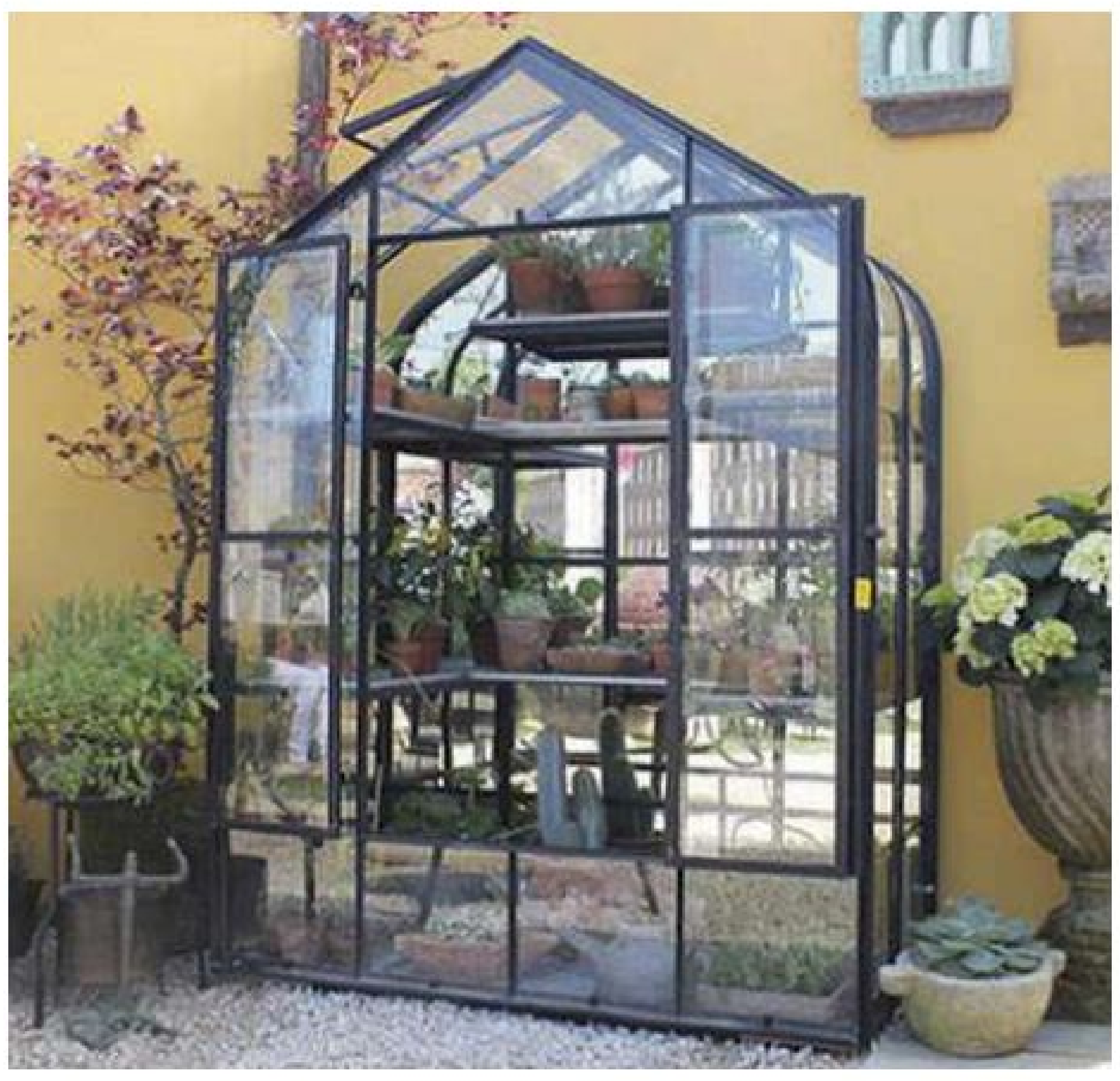

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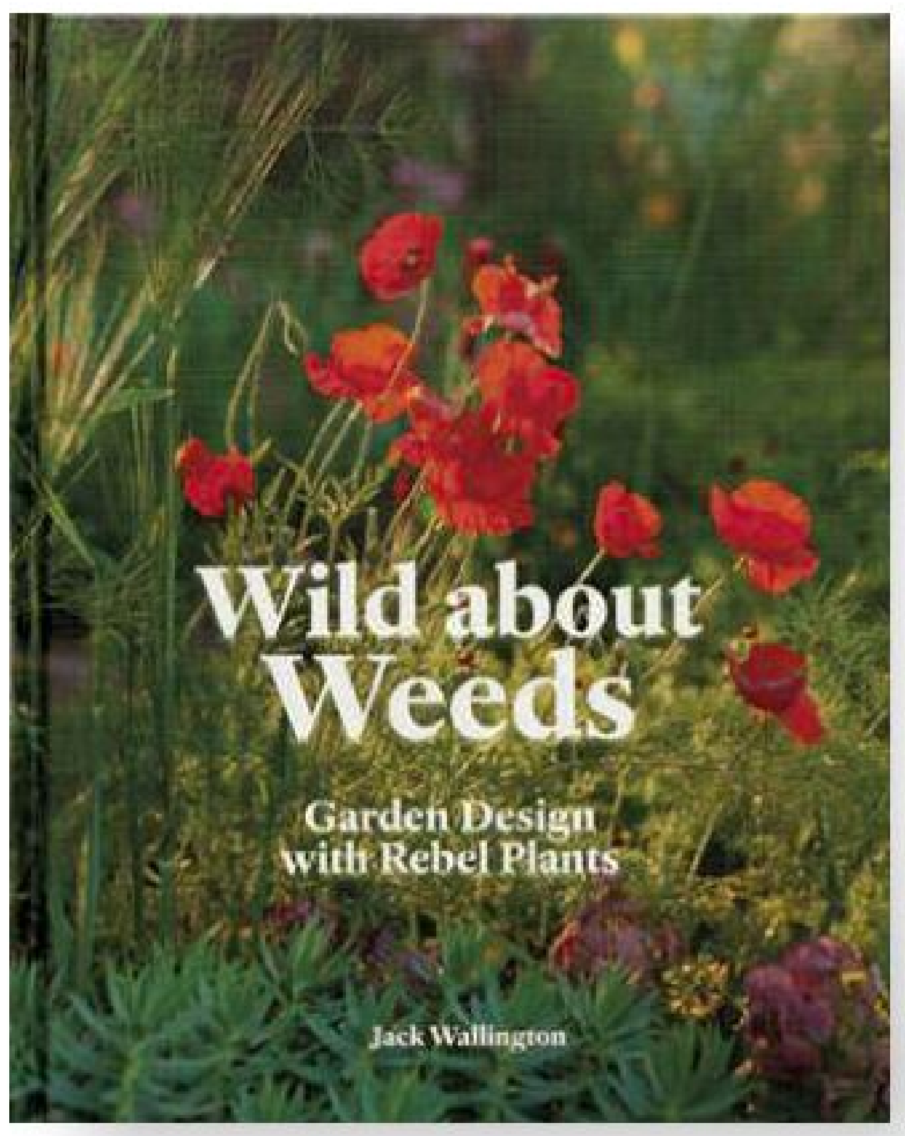
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, back issues, crossword, reader offer

ISABEL BANNERMAN

These three gloriously scented quinces (*Cydonia oblonga* 'Vranja') are among the many aromatic fruits and flowers discussed – and photographed – by the designer and author Isabel Bannerman in her new book *Scent Magic*, reviewed on page 102.

BOOK REVIEWS



WILD ABOUT WEEDS: GARDEN DESIGN WITH REBEL PLANTS

by Jack Wallington

Laurence King Publishing,
£19.99
ISBN 978-1786275301

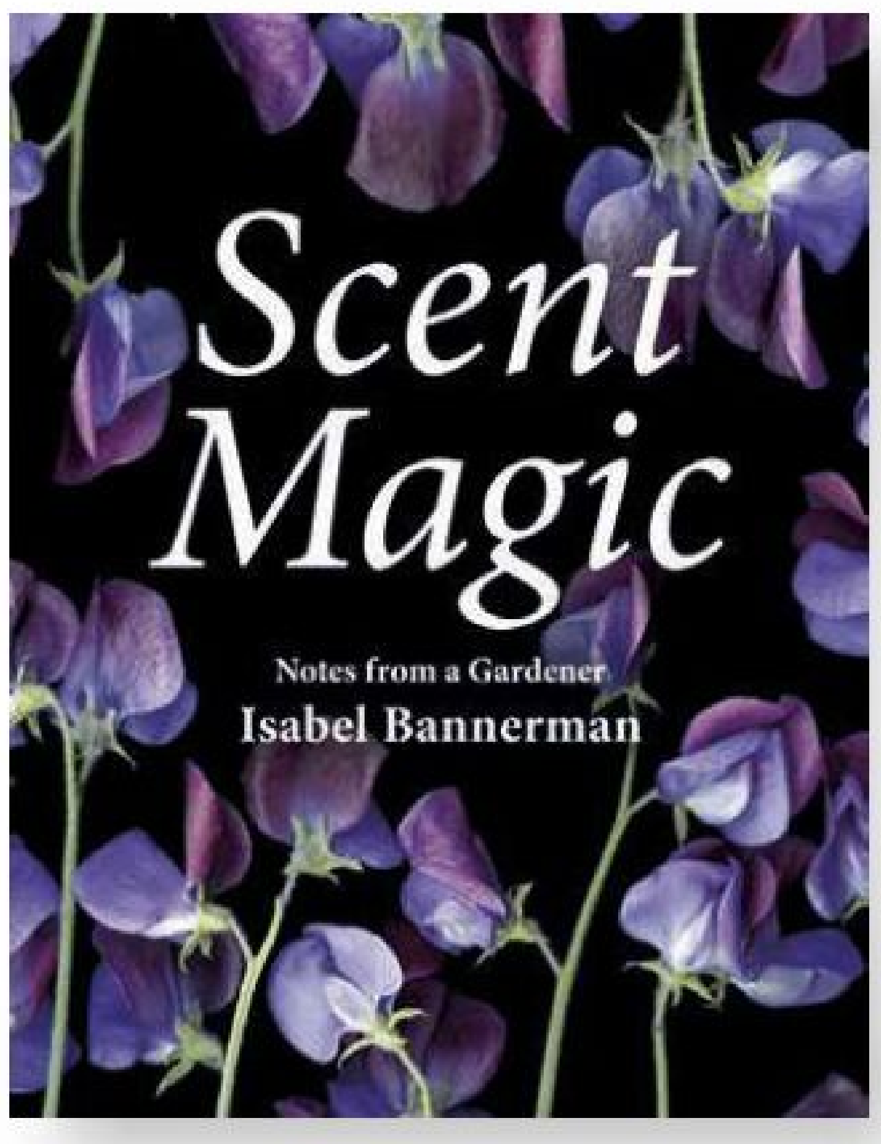
Weed, wild or garden-worthy? This well-argued advocacy for rebel plants shows why we should all be growing a few in our gardens.

Reviewer Ambra Edwards is a writer and garden historian.

Jack Wallington wants us all to embrace weeds. They're easy, they're wildlife-friendly, and they fit with the modern enthusiasm for naturalistic ecological planting.

But what exactly is a weed? The word, he suggests, is 'merely a broad and negative term associated with any plant that pops up where we weren't expecting it'. He settles on a definition as 'a plant that reproduces seemingly uncontrollably', and divides garden weeds into the 'good, the bad and the unappreciated.' The 'good' includes plants many of us grow as wildflowers: forget-me-nots, violets, bluebells and foxgloves. The 'bad' – too troublesome to introduce into any garden – includes ground elder, bindweed, horsetail and, curiously, fennel. You may be surprised not to see stinging nettles or docks on this list or to be encouraged to plant giant hogweed or ragwort – both illegal to allow to spread or to plant in the wild in the UK. We are on safer ground with the 'glowing amber jewels' of *Pilosella aurantiaca*, the elegant spires of *Linaria purpurea* or the wildly fashionable umbellifer *Daucus carota*.

Wallington's lively and thought-provoking text urges us to be more imaginative in our gardens – to cherish the stately architecture of teasels or the delicate ferny foliage of herb robert; to use oxalis as decorative groundcover; to encourage campanulas and corydalis to proliferate on walls, even to plant daisies in hanging baskets. But the requirement for an international readership throws up local anomalies: British gardeners will be astonished to see exotic *Ricinus communis* classified as a weed (it is considered noxious in California); clarification of the UK law surrounding invasive species (especially Japanese knotweed) would have been more helpful.



SCENT MAGIC

by Isabel Bannerman

Pimpernel Press, £30
ISBN 978-1910258491

A beautifully romantic book that allows you inside the mind of one of the UK's most influential garden designers.

Reviewer Joshua Sparkes is head gardener at Forde Abbey.

Scent Magic is a collection of notes, memories and beautifully detailed observations of fragrance throughout the gardening year, written by garden designer Isabel Bannerman. It indulges the reader in the power of fragrance and has a beautiful style of writing that I found incredibly immersive and made me want to keep reading on.

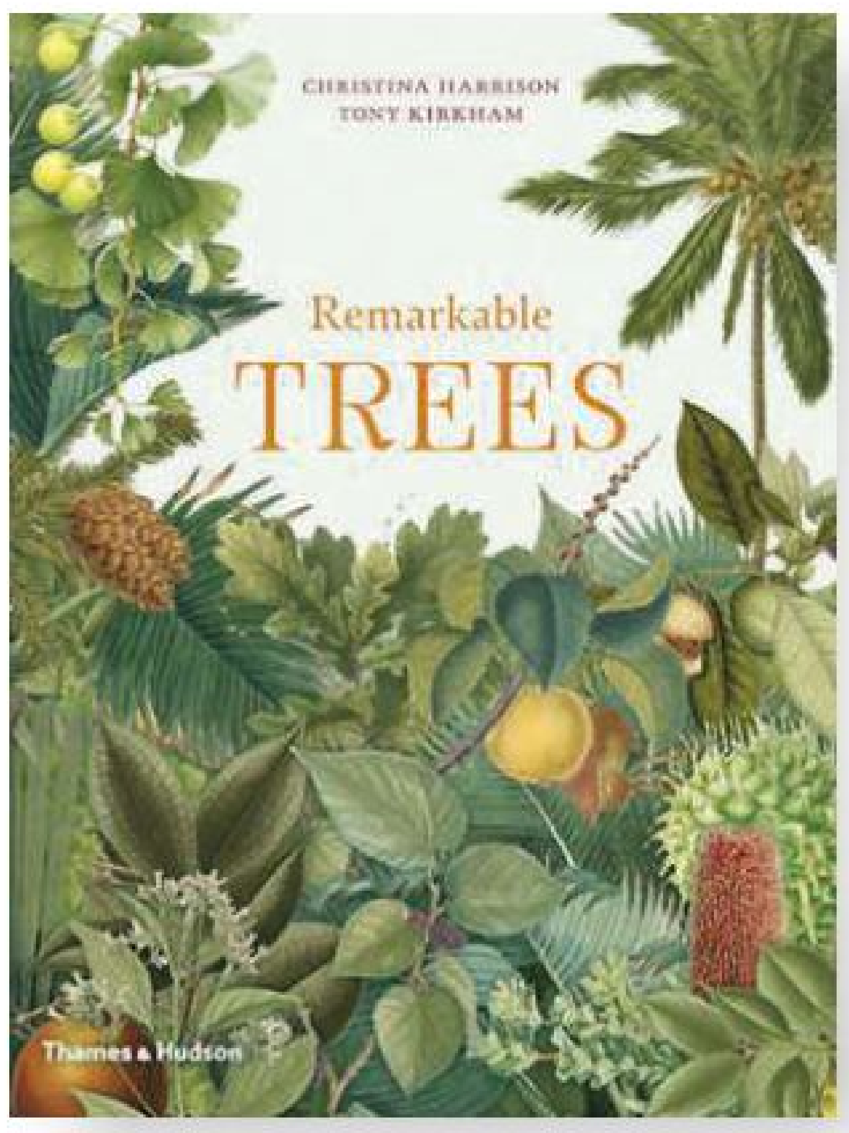
It feels as if you are having a conversation with the author, which creates a very personal connection, as she passes on wonderful seasonal poems, historical and botanical facts and gorgeous photos making for such a joyful read.

This has to be one of the most beautifully written pieces I have read in a long time. Focussing on the magic of scent in the garden, it brings to mind the writing of Vita Sackville-West, who above all gardened for fragrance.

I especially loved the chapter titled Summer Pudding. It documents one of the greatest garden loves: the rose, noting their individual character, historical journeys and, of course, their unique fragrances being described in great detail. It will certainly have me returning to old favourites to test their scent anew. I never realised *Rosa foetida* could smell of fresh coriander seeds.

The book is illustrated with gorgeous garden photography by the author and many of Isabel's striking botanical portraits, which capture petals, leaves, stems in all their boldness and fragility. They are both familiar and otherworldly and are a true celebration of the beauty of plants.

Scent Magic is a wonderfully romantic book and should sit on the book shelf of anyone who likes to sit and bask in the seasons as they pass by. It is a love letter to the easily missed details in the gardening year and shows how plants can seep into every corner of life.



REMARKABLE TREES
by Christina Harrison
and Tony Kirkham

Thames & Hudson, £24.95
ISBN 978-0500021927

Every plant has a story, and this is a book of exploration into the fascinating history of trees and the impact they have made on our civilisation.

Reviewer Steve Edney is head gardener at The Salutation.

Trees are one of the longest-living organisms on the planet, and as such you quickly realise how our fate is bound to their fate. The tree of life appears in almost all civilisations, depicting eternity or everlasting life; without wood to make fire we would never have risen to be the dominant species on Earth, and right up to today there is a growing awareness of the vital role they play in benefiting our environment and climate. As a former arborist I'm only too delighted to sing their praises.

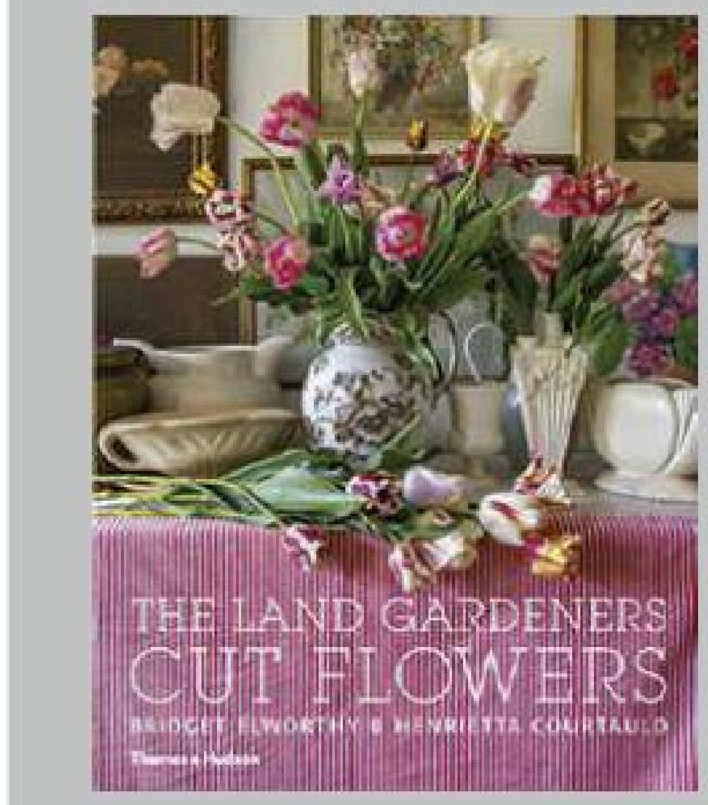
If you are looking for a book on tree identification, this is not it. There are already quite enough books that do a great job of that. This is a book of exploration into the richness and diversity that the natural world has to offer in the domain of trees, and the epic stories they have to reveal.

What a rare treat to read a book by experts from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Tony Kirkham and Christina Harrison have written this book intelligently, breaking it down into chapters you can dip in and out of, such as Body and Soul, and Building and Creating. Each section takes you on a very personal journey into how trees have shaped our world, from trees that have provided us invaluable food and medicine, to trees that have built our boats of exploration, to how closely trees are linked with many of our traditions and celebrations – all of which is testament to just how potent they have been on shaping our civilisation, history and everyday lives.

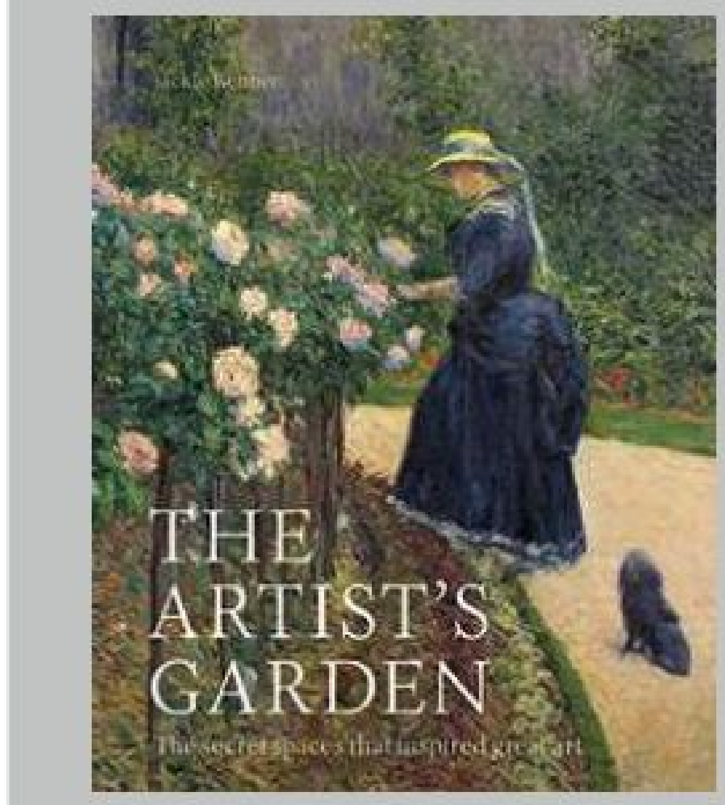
The illustrations are mainly from the Kew archives, with each picture a work of art – these wonderful drawings as remarkable themselves as the trees they depict, adding extra depth for the readers journey through the world of trees.

Other books

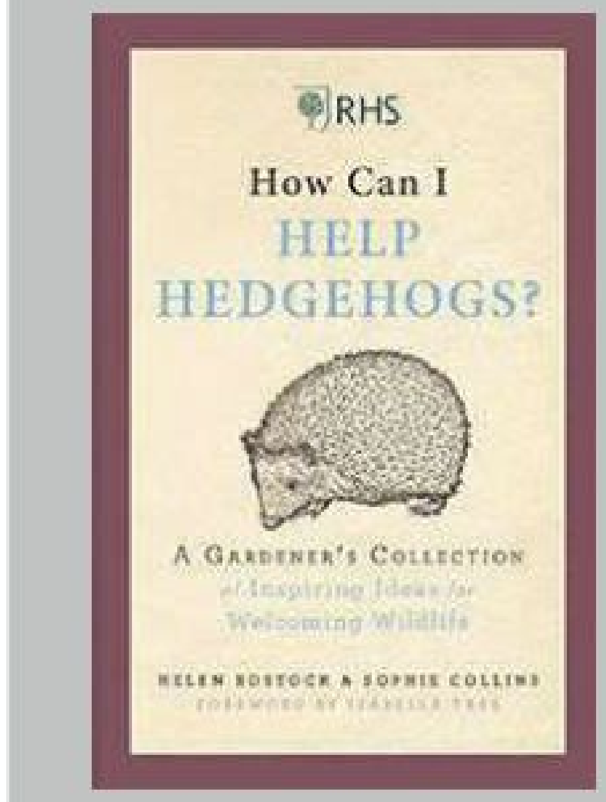
With ideas for growing the flowers with which to create cut flower displays and ways to encourage wildlife into your garden.



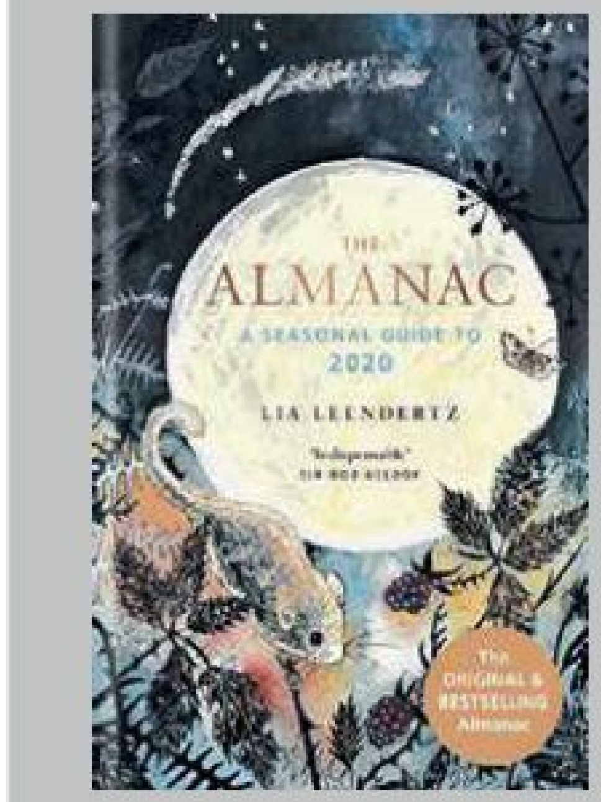
THE LAND GARDENERS CUT FLOWERS
by Bridget Elworthy
& Henrietta Courtauld
Thames & Hudson, £39.95
ISBN 978-1760760380
A sumptuous insight into the Land Gardeners' approach to flower growing and soil health.



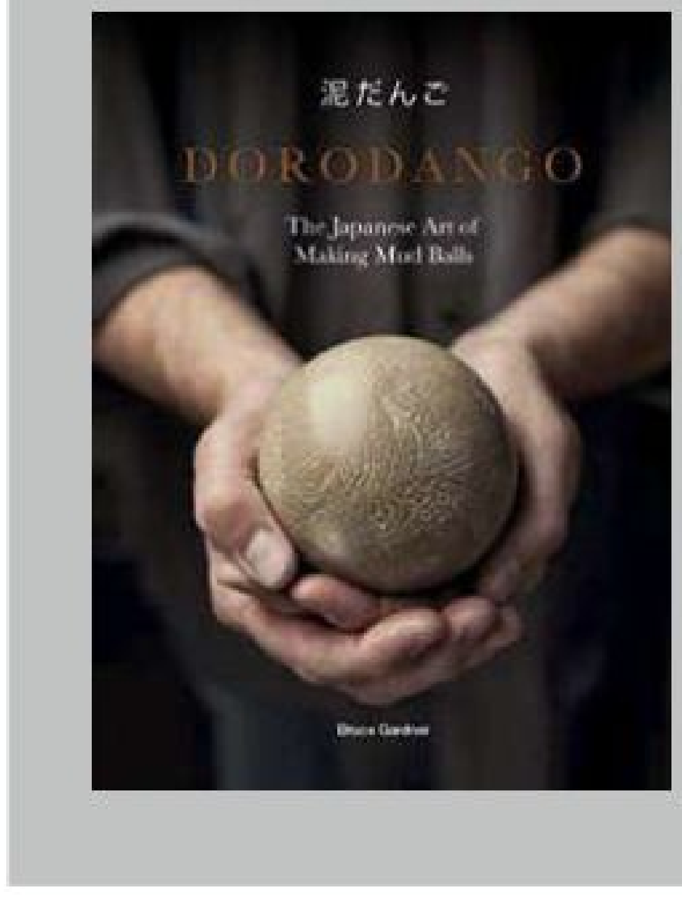
THE ARTIST'S GARDEN
by Jackie Bennett
White Lion Publishing £30
ISBN 978-1781318744
From Claude Monet's garden in Giverny to the artists' colony of Skagen, in the north of Denmark, Bennett explores the creative spaces that have inspired artists.



RHS HOW CAN I HELP HEDGEHOGS?
by Helen Bostock & Sophie Collins
Mitchel Beazley, £14.99
ISBN 978-1784726218
One hundred practical ideas from the RHS on helping to make your garden a haven for hedgehogs and other sorts of wildlife.



THE ALMANAC 2020
by Lia Leendertz
Octopus, £10
ISBN 978-1784726751
This is the third of Leendertz's seasonal guides to the year, helping us celebrate each month through an observation of both cultural history and the natural world.



DORODANGO: THE JAPANESE ART OF MAKING MUD BALLS
by Bruce Gardener
Laurence King, £12.99
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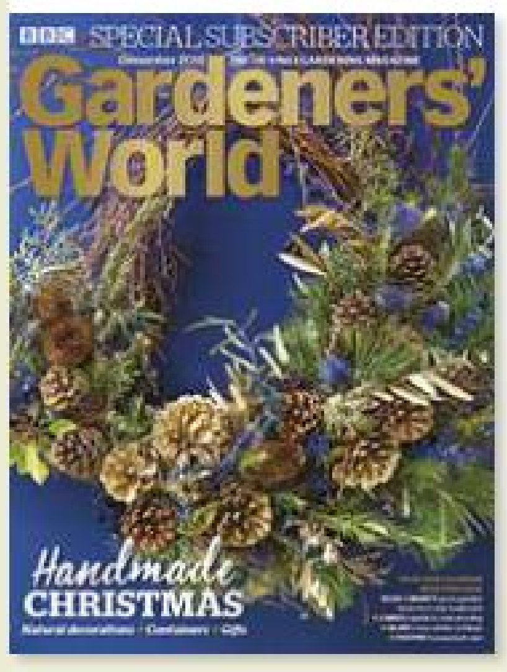
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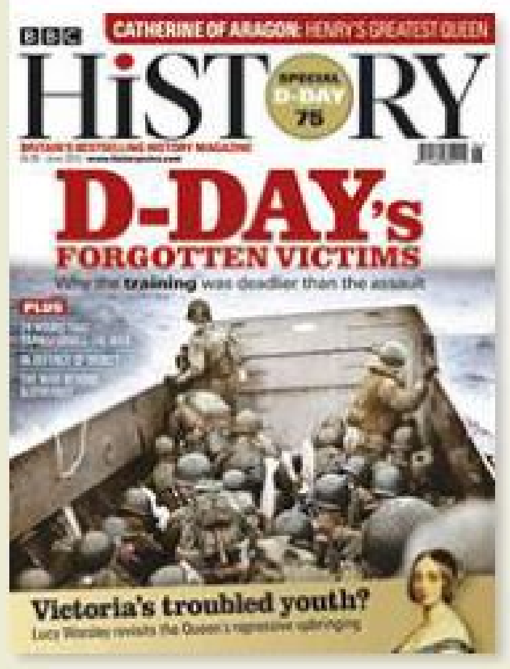
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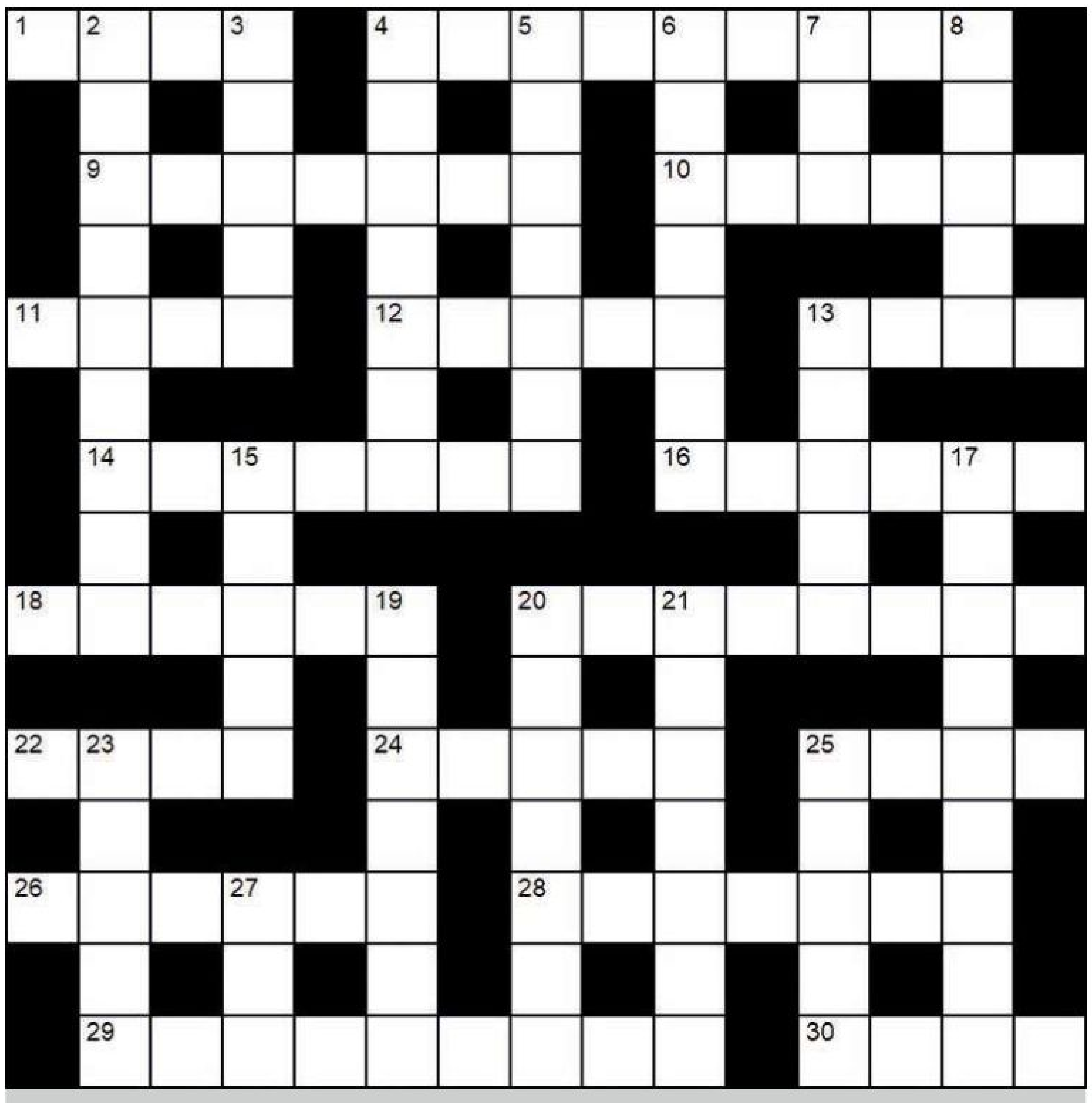
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Rain gently… a spade's depth (4)
4 A golden rod with arching flower sprays for a pyrotechnic display! (9)
9 Genus of a white-flowering umbellifer – left out of mixed mulleins (7)
10 Sweet potato roots, er, put in garden containers (6)
11 Moist – initially damaging *Ammi majus* plants (4)
12 A sweet red-orange strawberry – 'Adventurous Girl' (5)
13 Garden designer Jinny__ "Limbo dancing? Not I!" (4)
14 A compact hosta with blue-grey leaves… happy and peaceful (7)
16 A means of weighing a bulb's modified leaves? (6)
18 See 13 down
20 A classic red/white radish – and one of 4 across (8)
22 Enthusiasts… of trees with branches trained in a Y shape (4)
24 Imitating… a little lacecap in garden! (5)
25 *Crataegus* tree's fruits (4)
26 Company's total shares of… scented *Matthiola* plants? (6)
28 Grape hyacinth genus (7)
29 Genus of cornflower – provides a true cane (9)
30 Seed's covering… part of *Dianthus knappii* (4)

DOWN

2 Almond-flavoured nut and name of white-flowering clematis with green centres (9)
3 Spring bulb is sadly pitiful, if left out (5)
4 A 3 down with pink frilled petals – 'Pipe Dream'? (7)
5 It has funnel-shaped flowers and edible roots – scattered in a romp (7)
6 Shrivels – between a horse's shoulder blades? (7)
7 Leaf's main vein – Adam's spare one? (3)
8 A fast-maturing Florence fennel – or I is wrong! (5)
13/18 An F1 courgette… makes a chocolate/cherry gateau (5,6)
15 Ladybirds initially seek out vegetables of onion genus (5)
17 Alpine plant, genus *Leontopodium* – one in weedless mess (9)
19 Umbellifer aka 'deadly carrot' – is a path affected? (7)
20 Clematis '____', large-flowered lilac-blue form, to gleam tremulously (7)
21 Princess who founded Kew Gardens in 1759… in Georgia, USA? (7)
23 A gazania with cream/red/yellow flowers, native of Mexico once (5)
25 Ericaceous shrub – needs warmth and hydrogen (5)
27 Container… contains 'Adam's Needle', initially (3)

Solutions to this month's crossword will be printed next month

SOLUTIONS TO OCTOBER'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Tagetes **5** Squash **8** Tara **9** Amigo **11** Clusiana **13** Trowel **14** Odessa **16** Hokusai **18** Setaria **21** Manure **23** Ramrod **25** Celeriac **27** Etna **28/10** Fairy ring **29** Sore **31** Petals **32** Garland.

DOWN 1 Tea **2** Grasses **3** Tiara **4** Spinach **5** Sport **6** Uproots **7** Sansevieria **12** Lady's mantle **15** Air **17** Kim **19** Ternata **20** Arching **22** Nerissa **24** Daffs **26** Layer **30** Rod.

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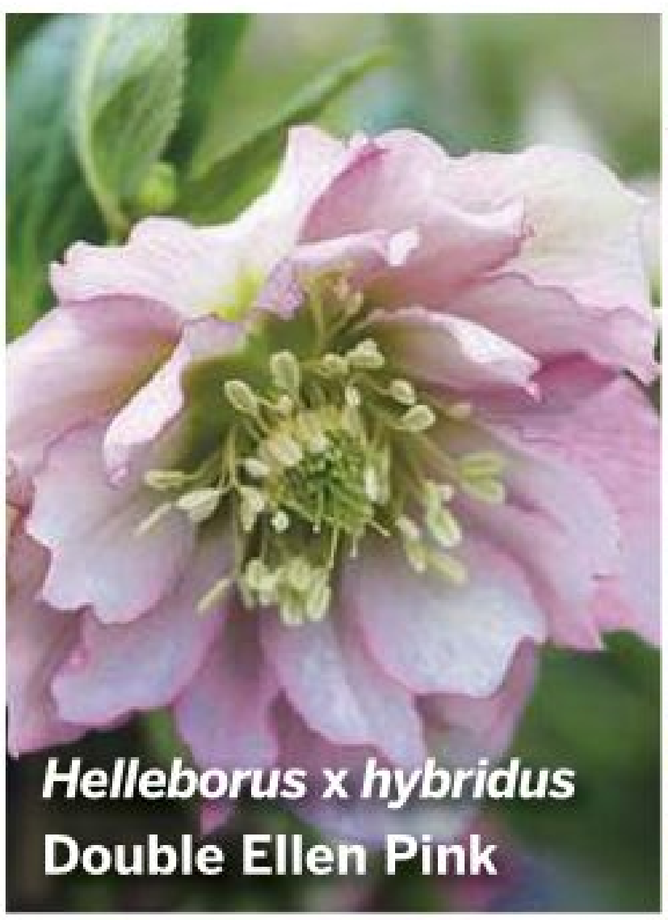
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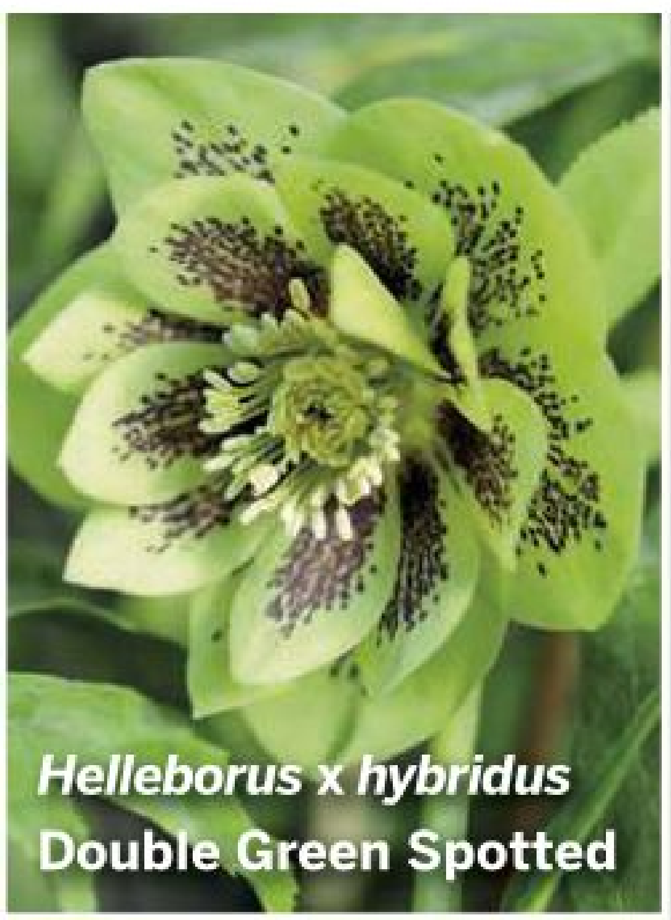
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Puschkinia scilloides
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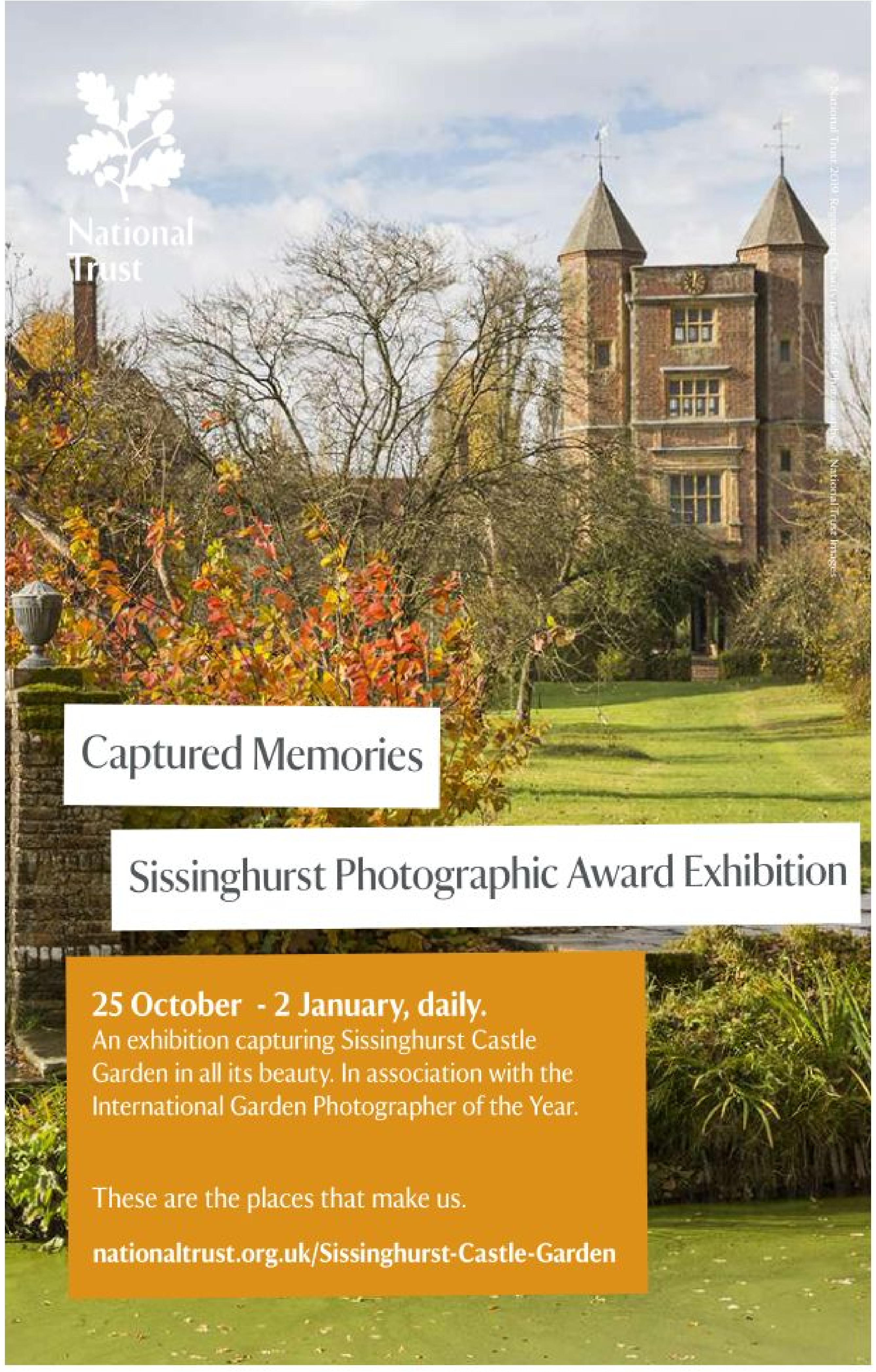

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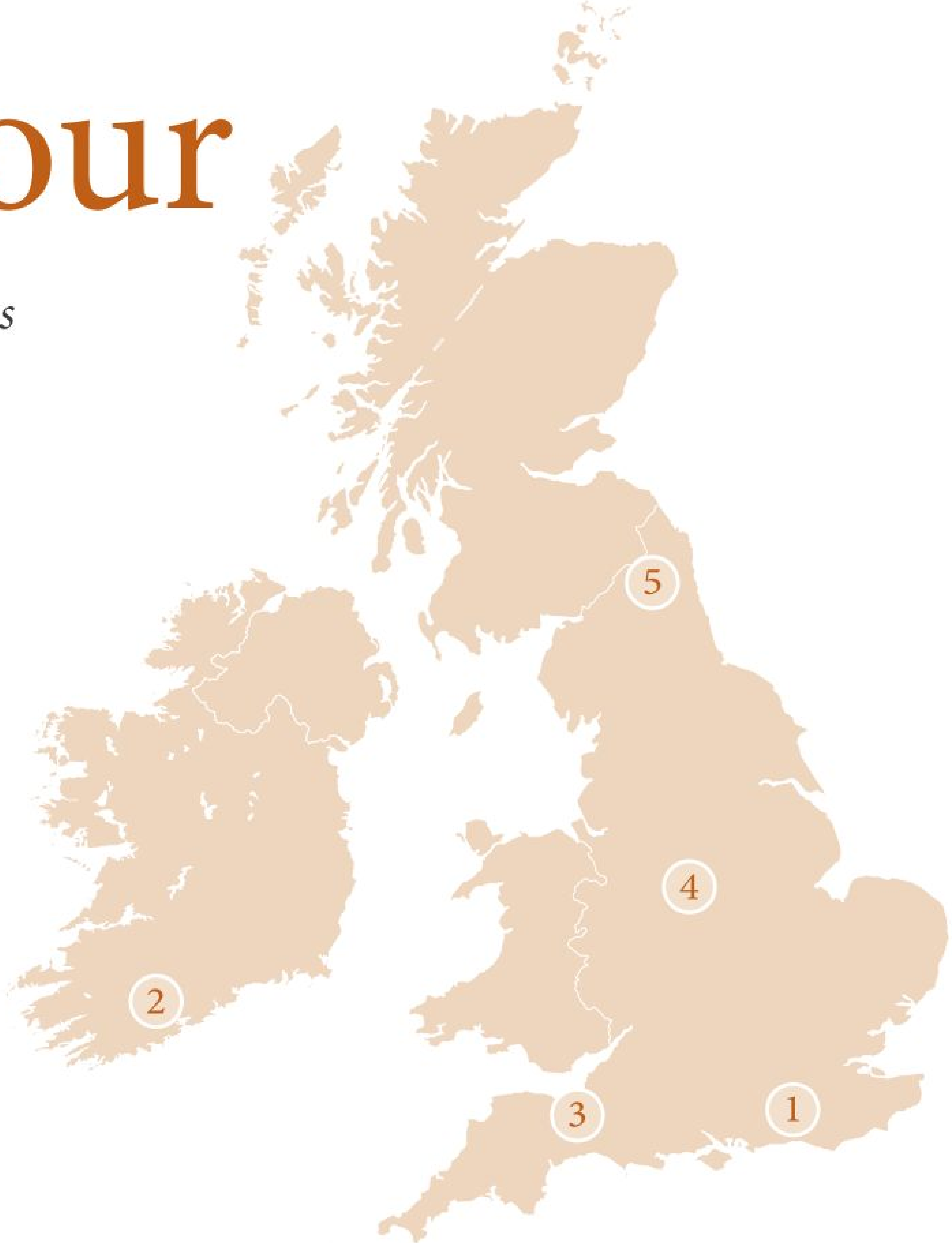

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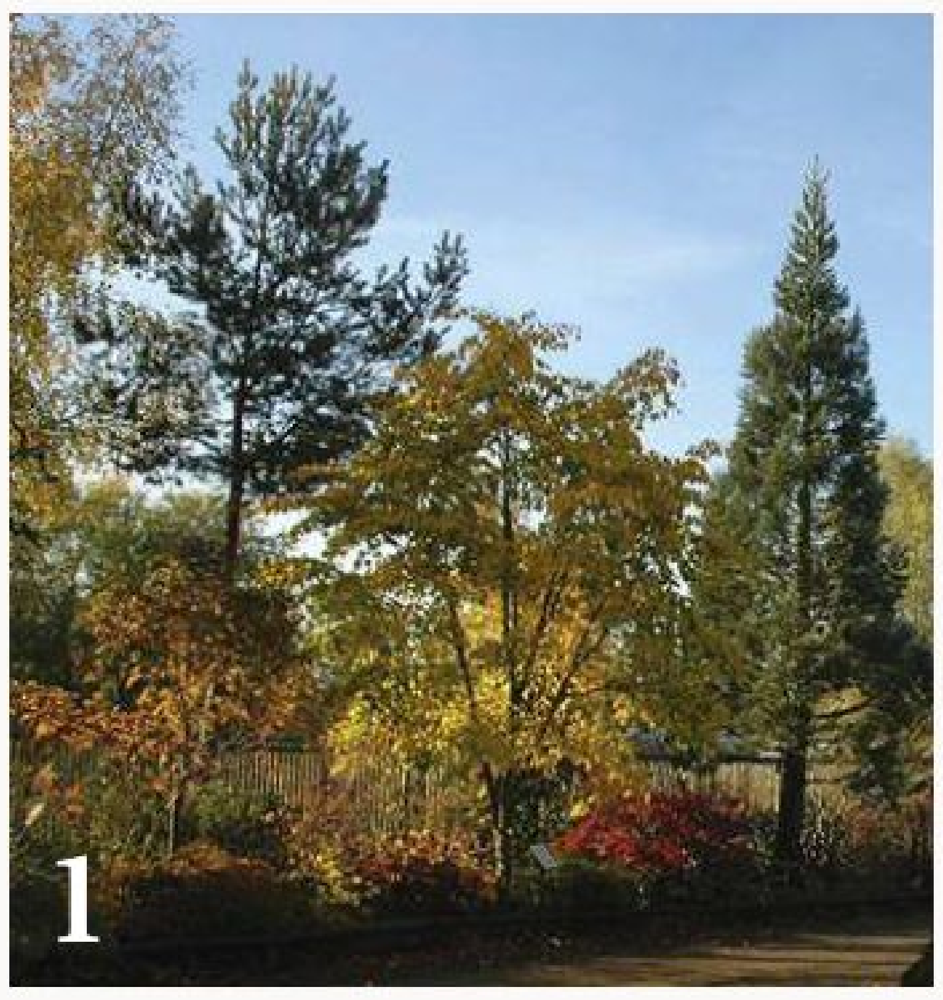
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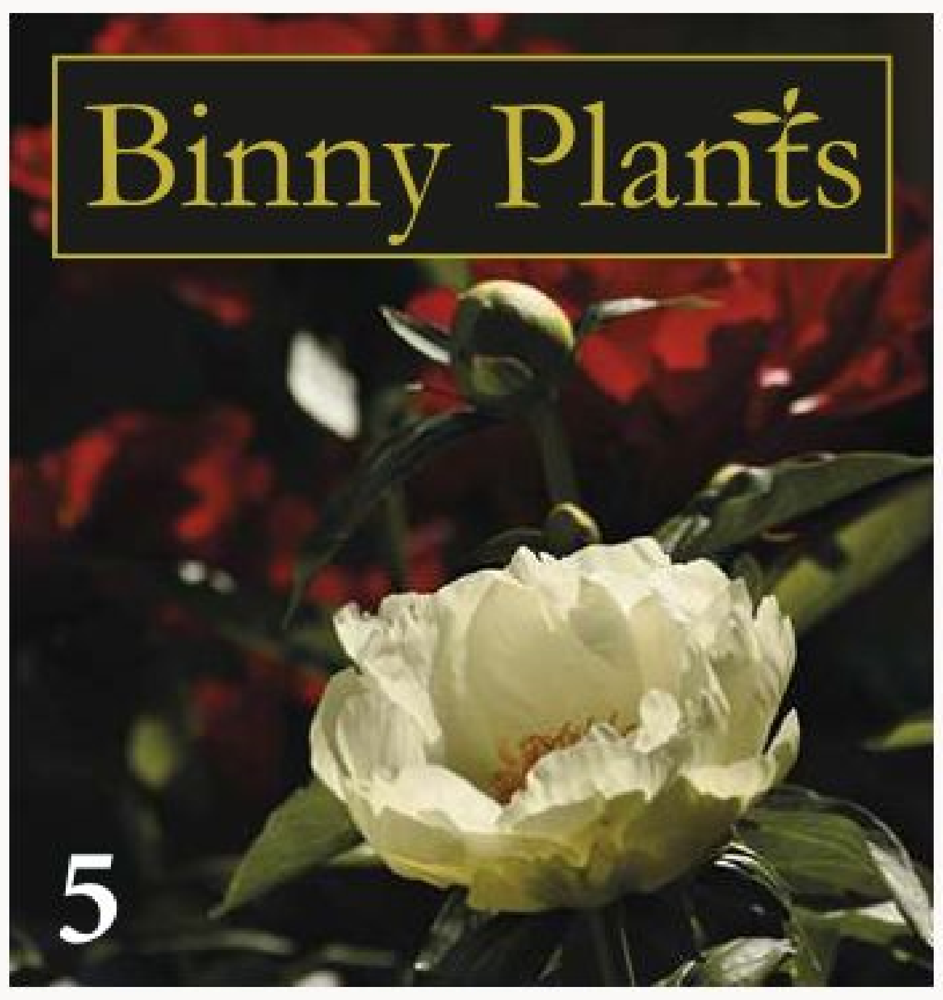

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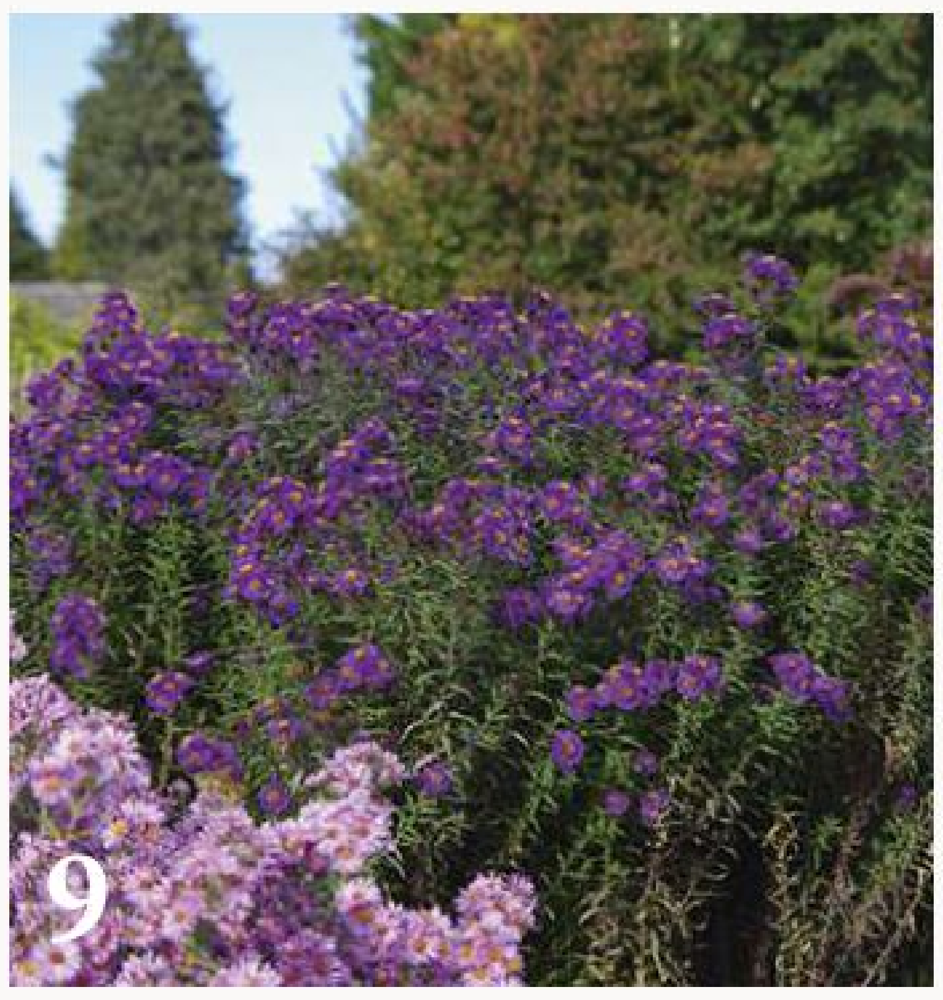
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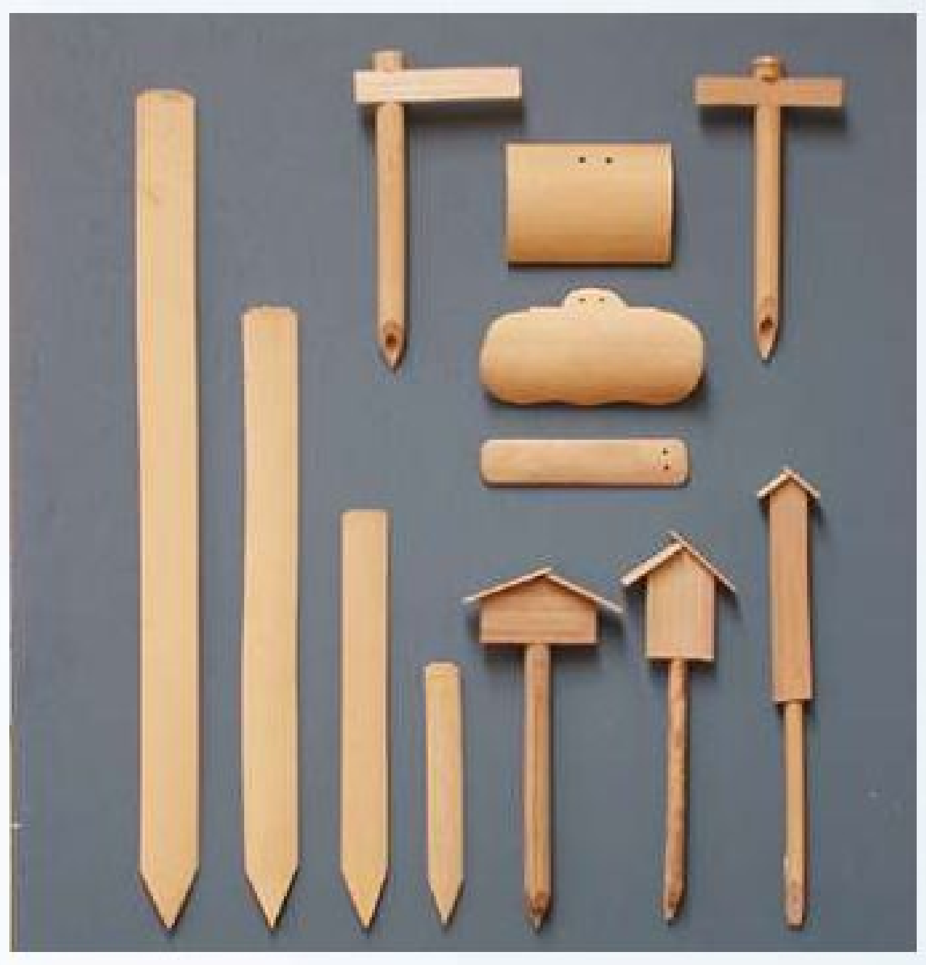

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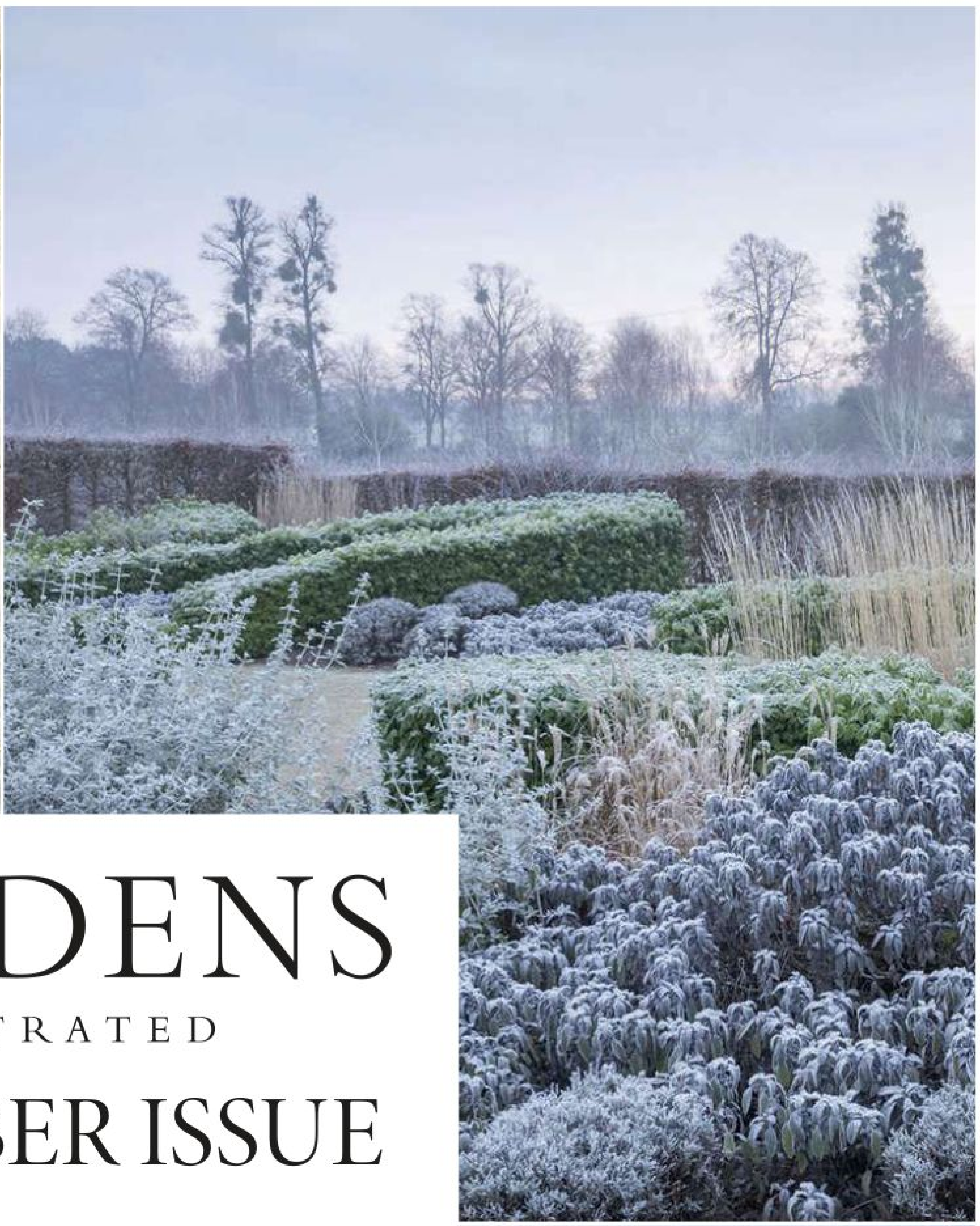

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DECEMBER ISSUE

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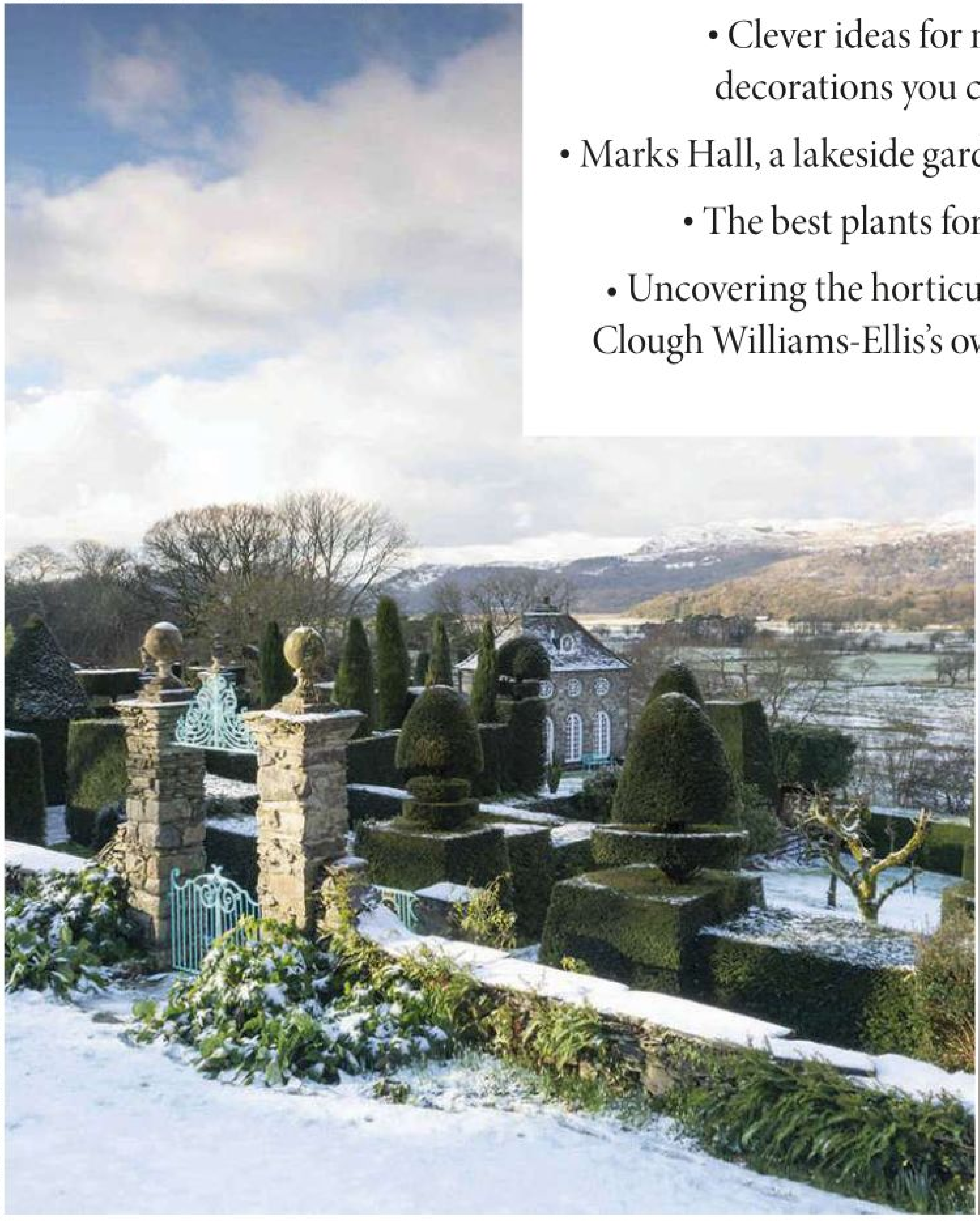
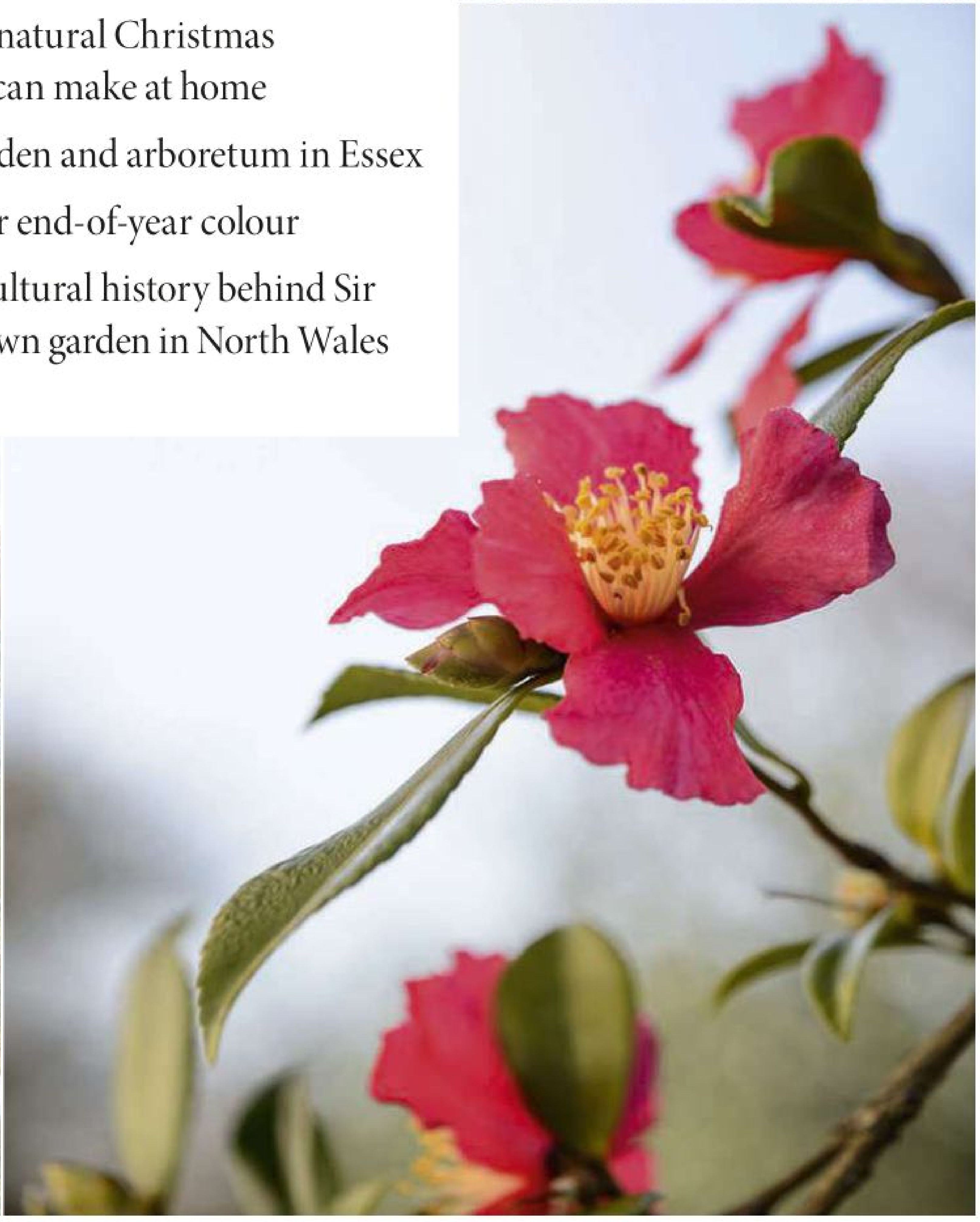
- Marks Hall, a lakeside garden and arboretum in Essex
- The best plants for end-of-year colour
- Uncovering the horticultural history behind Sir Clough Williams-Ellis's own garden in North Wales





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The Great Indoors

Ferns sparked the first houseplant craze and are still a great houseplant choice, especially the unfussy *Phlebodium aureum*

WORDS **JESS SNOWBALL**
ILLUSTRATION **AGATA WIERZBICKA**

Ferns have an enduring appeal to houseplant enthusiasts. Pteridomania or Fern-Fever was the first houseplant craze among Victorians, with fern motifs appearing everywhere. Plants were no longer labelled exclusively for the academic and the amateur naturalist was born. Ferns have always appealed; the exquisite detail of their fronds and varying green tones radiate a raw, forestry feel.

Polypodiaceae is among the largest of the fern families, representing more than 60 genera. Within this *Phlebodium aureum*, the blue star fern is one of four *Phlebodium* species, which originate from the tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas and are easily differentiated. All are exclusively epiphytic; they can be found clinging to parts of other plants high up in the canopy of forests.

Growing to around a metre in height *Phlebodium aureum* differs slightly from plants we more commonly think of as ferns, such as *Dryopteris filix-mas*, due in part to its colour. Its wavy blue-green fronds vary between silver, grey and palest green and appear from creeping, hairy rhizomes (modified stems). The fronds are lobed and can grow up to 40cm. The round, bright-orange sori (clusters of sporangia, the structures that produce and contain spores) are arranged in two rows on each side of the midrib on the underside of the fronds.

This is a very tough plant. I have grown a blue star fern in the open terrarium (of a pint glass) with almost no growing medium and only occasional watering. Five years on, it's thriving. Another, which is growing terrestrially in a pot, with sporadic waterings, is equally happy. The fern's epiphytic habit and rhizomatous form allow it to succeed in unfavourable environments.

Cultivation

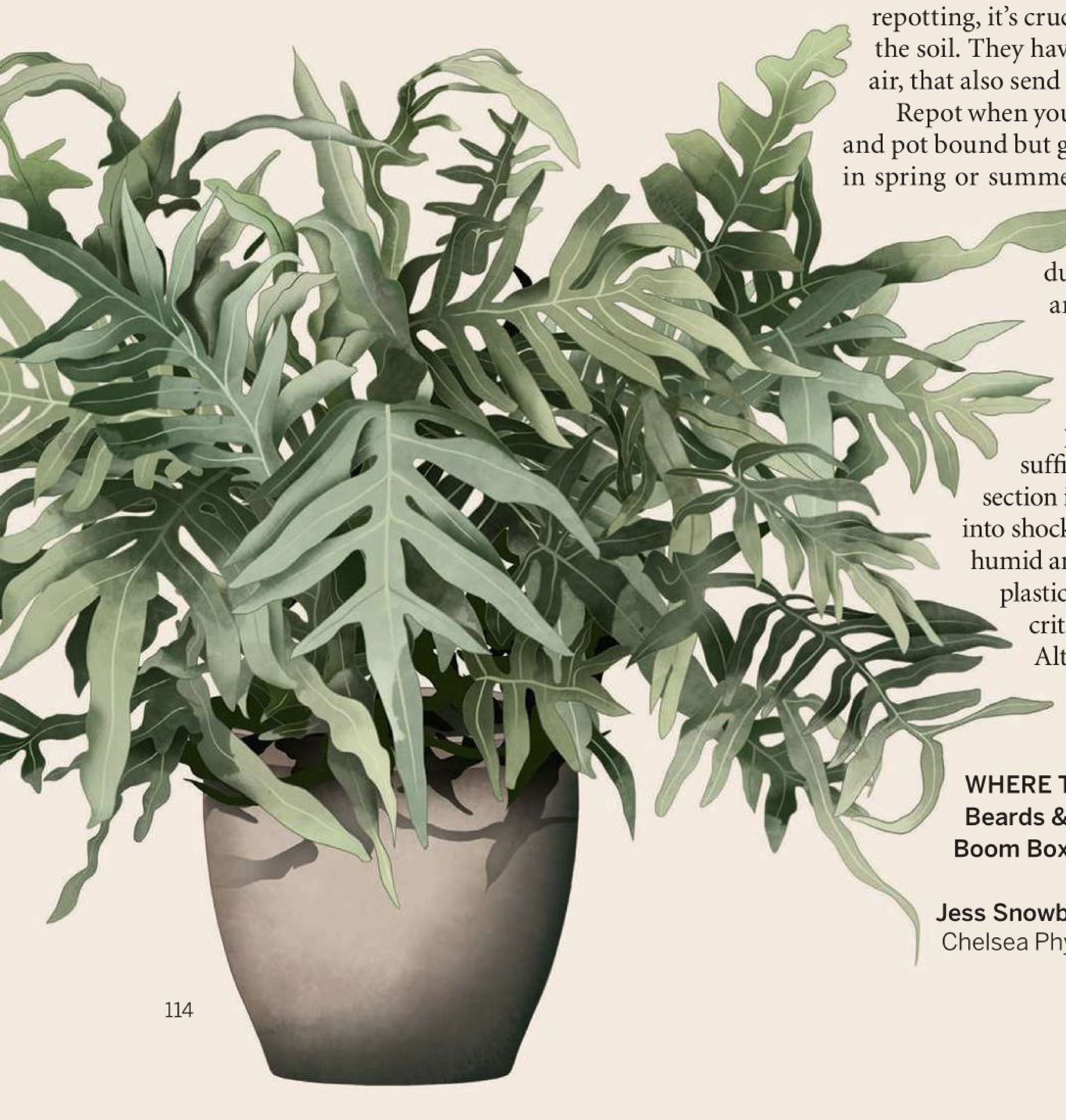
Phlebodium aureum are extremely easy to grow and are generally unfussy of their conditions. Grow them in a bright spot with little or partial direct sun. They will tolerate sun a little more than most other ferns. Water generously once you notice the pot drying out, continuing until water runs out of drainage holes at the bottom. Alternatively submerge the plant in a sink or bucket of water until all the air bubbles (old oxygen) have been forced out from the soil and allow it to drain. Take care not to over water, *Phlebodium* do not like to be constantly soggy.

When choosing a potting mix, bear in mind the plant's epiphyte habit, growing on other plants in its natural habitat, and choose a very loose, free-draining medium. Bark, grit and pumice or an orchid mix work well. When repotting, it's crucial not to bury the hairy rhizomes below the surface of the soil. They have trichomes (tiny hairs), which capture water from the air, that also send out roots and shoots.

Repot when you notice the rhizomes and roots are becoming crowded and pot bound but generally, epiphytes can be left for a while. Try to repot in spring or summer if required and if root damage is inevitable, water well afterwards. Feed during the growing season at a low dosage. There is no need to feed during the winter at all, as these aren't hungry plants and you could risk damage.

Propagate *Phlebodium aureum* by division. While repotting, gently tease out roots from the root ball. The number of divisions depends on the size of the parent plant and you can create as many sections as there are sufficient roots, rhizomes and leaves to support. Pot up each section in a free-draining mix and water in well. If the plant goes into shock remove any dying leaves and keep the plant in a warm, humid and light location. Wrapping the potted division in a clear plastic bag tied at the top with string creates humidity, reducing critical water loss. Remove the bag after a few days. Alternatively, don't be afraid to remove a few healthy leaves to balance out the loss of roots – again this lowers the amount of water lost. □

PHLEBODIUM AUREUM



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